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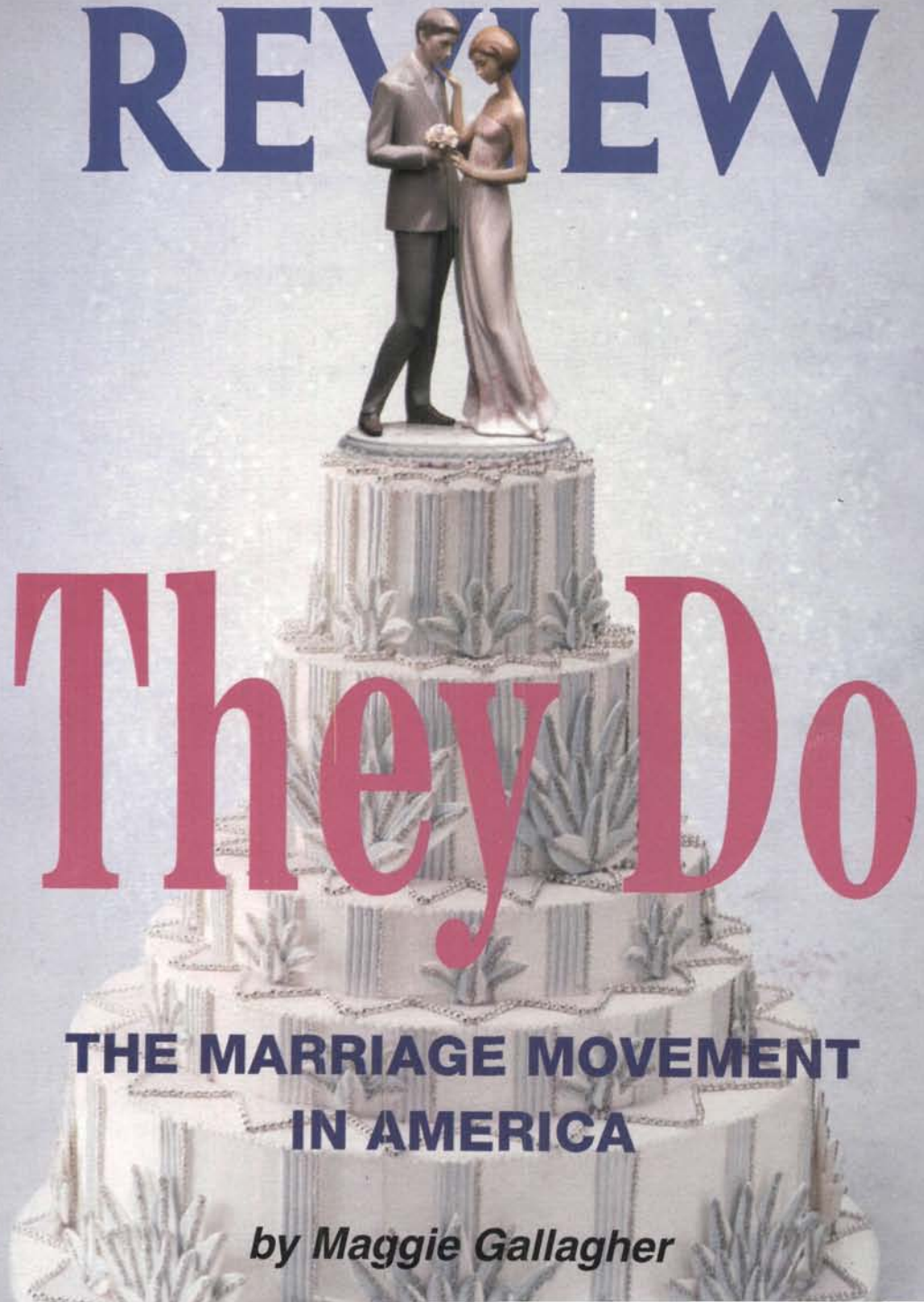
Robert Harris on Robert Conquest's 20th Century

NATIONAL REVIEW



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by Maggie Gallagher

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NATIONAL REVIEW

November 8 issue; printed October 20

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■ LETTERS ■

STANDING PAT

The trouble with Ramesh Ponnuru's analysis of Pat Buchanan's break with the Republican party ("A Conservative No More, " Oct. 11) is that it begins with a false premise and ends with a false conclusion. Mr. Ponnuru's original assertion, "that Buchanan's ideological wanderings have taken him far from the heartland of the Republican party and the conservative movement," assumes an identity between the GOP and conservatism that does not exist—just ask now-independent New Hampshire senator Bob Smith.

A party that can claim "moderates" like New Jersey governor Christie Whitman, Connecticut representative Chris Shays, and presidential hopeful Elizabeth Dole cannot speak for the conservative movement any more than Bill Clinton's middle-of-the-road Democrats speak for liberalism. Buchanan is saying what many of us grassroots conservatives believe—that conservatism has become as meaningless among Republicans as liberalism has become among Democrats.

James H. K. McDermott
Fayetteville, N.C.

ELECTABILITY

What's with NATIONAL REVIEW's current effort to elect Al Gore president? In your Sept. 13 issue John O'Sullivan followed an attack on Gov. Bush ("George W. Clinton," Aug. 9) with a piece encouraging Pat Buchanan to run and split the conservative vote ("Will Pat Go?"). Richard Brookhiser added to it an intemperate attack on the Texas governor ("Boy Bush"). How can Gore-appointed federal judges (including at least three to the Supreme Court) possibly be better for the country than those whom Gov. Bush—who is a fan of Justice Antonin Scalia—would nominate? He may not be as intellectual as you'd like, but he's conservative—and electable.

Robert L. Bradley
Houston, Tex.

TAXING TENNESSEE

Your item on Tennessee's budget and tax situation ("The Week," Oct. 11) is the sort of thing I would expect in "Letter from Al." "Massive spending"? "Biggest tax increase in Tennessee history"? Gov. Don Sundquist leads one of the most fiscally conservative administrations in the country. Tennessee remains 47th nationally in per capita spending and 50th in taxes.

It takes a great deal of "fun with numbers" to reach the conclusions you have. You are either kidding or have been misled.

Ralph M. Perrey
Office of the Governor
Nashville, Tenn.

CLARIFICATION

In my article "Monkey on Our Backs" (Sept. 13), drawing on Hubert Yockey's *Information Theory and Molecular Biology*, I wrote that it had been "established that the simplest version of DNA contains *more information* than is contained in all the laws of chemistry and physics." After letters of protest and correspondence with Yockey himself, I have learned that my interpretation of Yockey's finding was too categorical. Though it's not immediately clear from his text, it turns out that Yockey is referring to a specific subset of chemical and physical laws—i.e., those that govern biological processes directly. His point, he has since explained, is merely that physics and chemistry provide no ready explanation for the information content of the genome. He does not claim in principle that there is no physical-chemical explanation for the information in the genome; he assumes that there is. Rather, he argues that, for a variety of reasons, scientists may never be able to find it.

Patrick Glynn
Washington, D.C.

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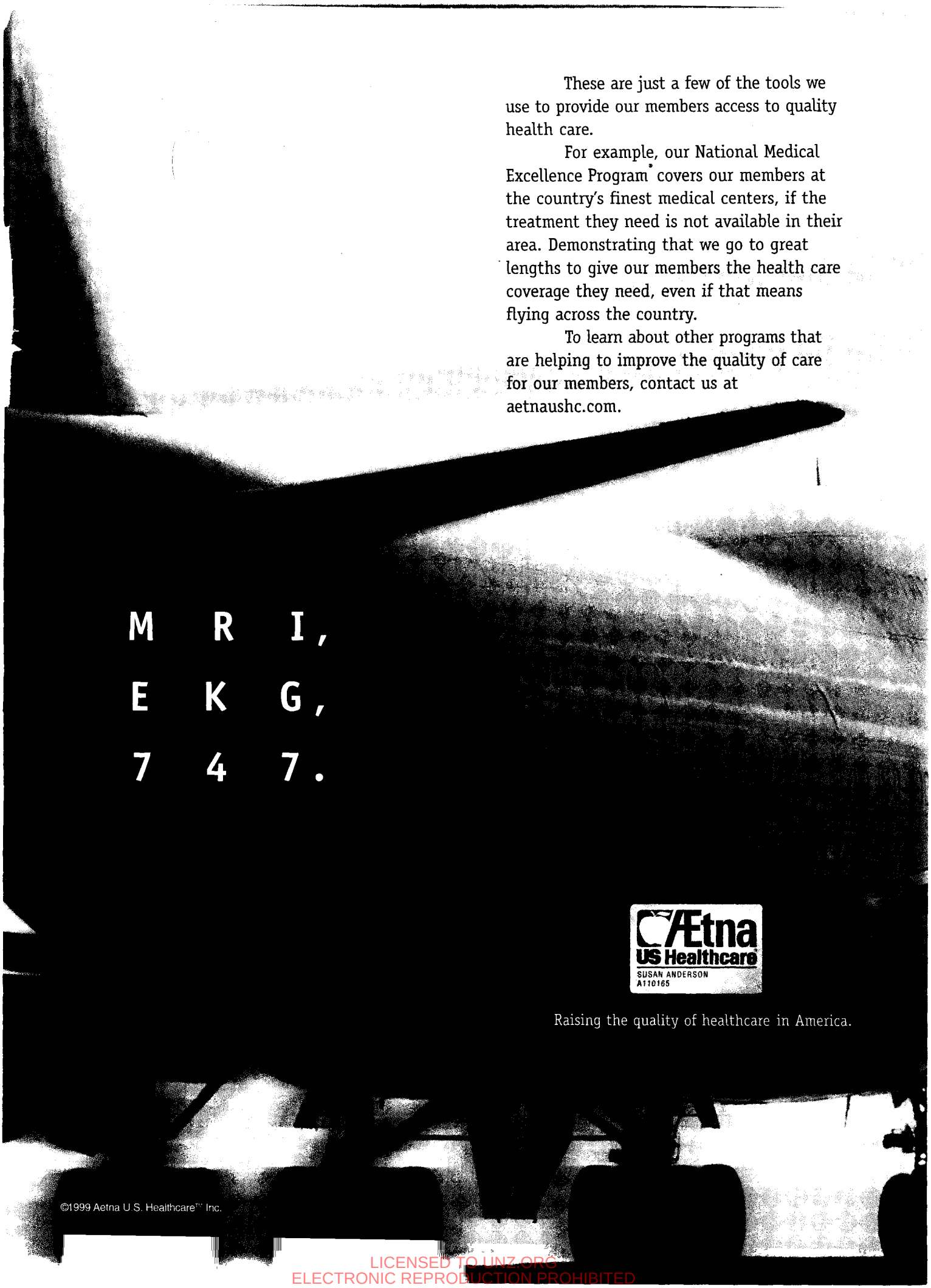

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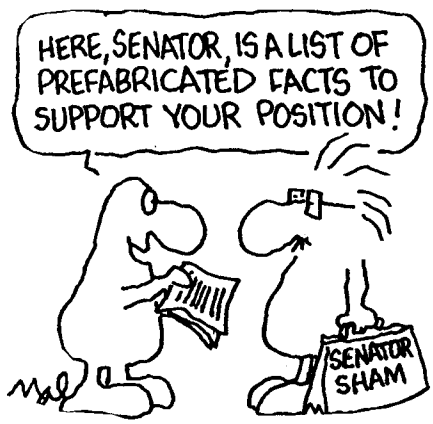
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, on Irish peace process: "I've spent an enormous amount of time trying to help the people in the land of my forebears, in Northern Ireland, get over 600 years of religious fights. And every time they make an agreement to do it, they're like a couple of drunks walking out of the bar for the last time. When they get to the swinging door, they turn right around and go back in again and say, 'I just can't quite get there.' It's hard to give up these things." . . . White House flack **Joe Lockhart**, reading statement from Clinton hours later: "I used a metaphor that was inappropriate. . . . I want to express my regret for any offense my remarks caused." . . . Auction in Las Vegas will include love note from 15-year-old Bill Clinton to 11-year-old girl: "Dear Debbie, You will always be my best girl. [Signed] Billy Clinton." . . . President **Bush**, describing the joys of e-mail: "I can use color and different fonts to emphasize different things. And I can forward **Monica Lewinsky** jokes."

■ Vice President **Gore** promises to run "a rip-tootin' race for the presidency." . . . Gore wins AFL-CIO endorsement, but hires non-union labor to wire new Nashville headquarters. . . . **Donna Brazile**, fired by **Michael Dukakis** in 1988 after accusing George Bush of having extramarital affair, becomes Gore campaign manager. . . . Gore, asked by *Washington Post* whether he will ask for Clinton's support on campaign trail: "I haven't made a decision yet." . . . Gore, on Vietnam War: "Fifty-three thousand Americans lost their lives for what?" . . . Gore, on Korean War: "I wouldn't label it a mistake, but I think that there were decisions during the course of that war that were questionable." . . . Sen. **John McCain** (R., Ariz.) surges in New Hampshire polls, also leads members of Congress in *Roll Call* tally of appearances on Sunday news shows this year with 22. . . . In CNN/*USA Today* poll, 60 percent say campaign-finance reform should be either a low priority or not one at all. . . . **Elizabeth Dole** announces support for denying public services, including education, to illegal immigrants. . . . **Steve Forbes** urges United Kingdom to quit European Union.

■ Gov. **Tom Ridge** (R., Pa.) signs death warrant for **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, convicted police killer and left-wing martyr, and schedules execution for Dec. 2. . . . **Hillary Clinton** files "statement of candidacy" for New York Senate race while in Europe. . . . Despite bolting GOP, Rep. **Michael Forbes** (D., N.Y.) votes in local Republican primary, says *Newsday*. . . . Democrats will have only five open House seats to defend next year, assuming they retain seat held by late Rep.



George Brown (Calif.) in Nov. special election. Republicans currently have 16 open seats. . . . Sen. **Tom Harkin** (D., Iowa) on proposal to block $25 million funding increase for National Labor Relations Board: "If they are not able to do their job, our whole society breaks down." . . . Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.) in *Civilization* interview: "I find that true antagonism of a partisan mode is rather less in evidence than it has been in the past. What has happened is a muddle, and a search for authority and legitimacy from outside groups that do not have any commitment to the political process or political parties."

■ School "vouchers were first proposed during the 1950s by economist **Milton Friedman** . . . [who] is best known to the world as the former economics adviser to **Augusto Pinochet**, the fascist dictator of Chile," says anti–school-choice leaflet distributed to elementary-school children in Michigan. . . . Bureau of Land Management considers reopening Mustang Ranch property, site of Nevada's first legal whorehouse, for wild-horse research center. . . . State Department sells Bermuda consul general's home, considered one of ritziest overseas diplomatic residences, in deal worth up to $13 million. . . . San Francisco considers adding category of overweight people to list of those protected from discrimination. . . . California approves **Ronald Reagan** license plate, with proceeds going to presidential library. . . . The National Journalism Center is accepting applications for its winter internship program. Contact M. Stanton Evans or Mal Kline at 800 Maryland Ave, N.E., Washington, D.C., 20002, or at (202) 544-1333.

■ British prime minister **Tony Blair** under pressure from career diplomats not to endorse Gore for president, according to *Financial Times*. . . . Iraq agrees to buy satellite intelligence photos from Russian firms to improve missile targeting in neighboring states, reports London *Telegraph*. . . . North Korean soldiers sighted in Congo, sparking speculation that they are trying to acquire uranium for weapons program. . . . "I was appalled to learn what the Catholic Church was doing, and I would say **[Thomas] Cardinal Winning** has allowed his religious principles to totally override his common sense," says pro-choice leader **Jane Roe** (not the original), following news that Catholic Church in Scotland paid 12-year-old not to have abortion. . . . Suicides hitting record levels in Japan, apparently because of poor economy. . . . Geologists identify remains of largest and oldest known crater on earth in South Africa, probably caused by asteroid or comet impact more than 2 billion years ago.

■ During test-ban treaty debate, Sen. **Ted Kennedy** (D., Mass.) thrice refers to Stockpile Stewardship Program as "Stockpile Stewardess Program." Aides later expunge remarks from *Congressional Record*. **NR**

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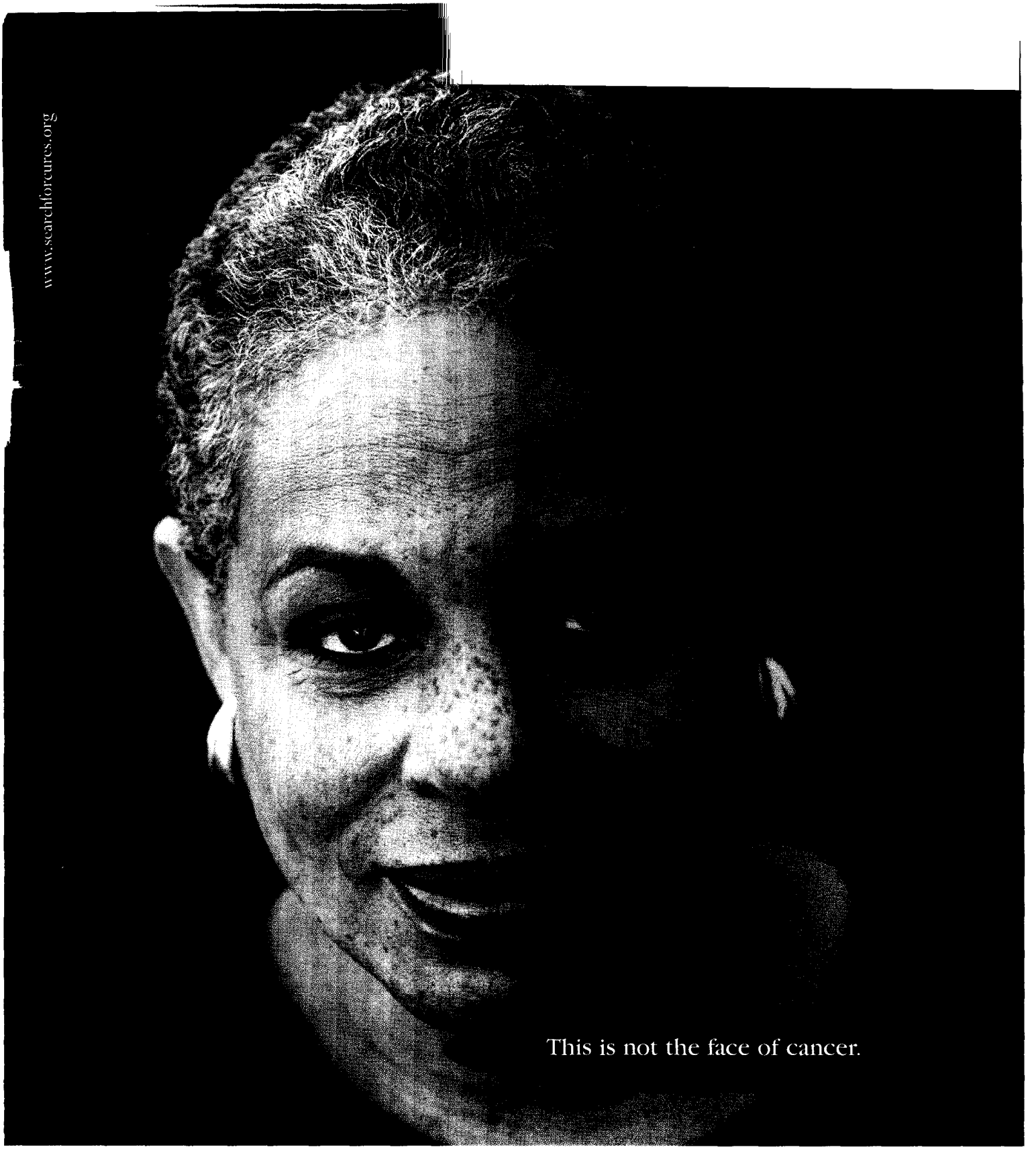

It's the face of Alexine Clement Jackson. Mother, grandmother and national president of the YWCA. At 50, she found out she had breast cancer, a disease that killed her mother when Alexine was only 4. She credits 12 years in remission to her doctors and advanced medicines developed by America's pharmaceutical company researchers. And pharmaceutical researchers will never stop looking for better medicines and ultimately a cure. It gives people like Alexine hope for the future and the future of their families.

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THE WEEK

■ It turns out Al Gore actually opposed a test-ban treaty in the 1980s. Has a relative of the vice president's been harmed by a nuclear test in the meantime?

■ Elizabeth Dole dropped out of the presidential race, blaming her inability to go the distance on George W. Bush's financial advantage. Bush does indeed have advantages over Mrs. Dole: not least, that he governs the second-largest state in the union while she has never been elected to anything. But Mrs. Dole entered the race in a strong position herself, having won enormous goodwill from her time at the Red Cross and respect for the discipline and savvy she has shown throughout her career. If she was unable to capitalize on these strengths, it was because she started her campaign by running to the left (on issues such as gun control) and then, when that did not work, flailed around ineffectually. Her sex was not enough to attract voters—something the eventual Republican nominee should consider when choosing his running mate.

■ Corporate donations to political parties—a.k.a. "soft money"—are supposed to be corrupting because they are unlimited. Sen. John McCain, arguing for a ban, says that, if not for these contributions, the budget would be trimmed of pork. Yet politicians support pork-barrel projects for the sakes of their constituents, not their contributors, which is why the projects are generally in the pols' home districts. (The biggest offender, incidentally, when it comes to these "unauthorized appropriations" is the Commerce Committee. Its chairman? John McCain.) In any case, McCain's bill is dead for the year. Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell worked tirelessly and with remorseless logic to kill it, ignoring the vituperation of a press obsessed with campaign-finance reform. Standing up to the powers that be, holding fast to principle, being one's own man: These are the qualities reformers say they want in politicians, and, as Mitch McConnell demonstrates, they have nothing to do with soft money or its absence.

■ President Clinton more or less accused Senate Republicans of racism after they rejected one of his judicial nominees, Ronnie White, who is black. The vote, he said, "provides strong evidence for those who believe that the Senate treats minority and women judicial nominees unequally." His charge led one Senate aide to remark mordantly that Republicans had surely been unaware of White's race: "If we had known he was black, we wouldn't have rejected him." When the race card is played, Republicans usually fold—which is why Clinton can toy with sending White back to the Senate. Funny, we don't recall Democrats apologizing for opposing Clarence Thomas in 1991. Back then, they said that a nominee's judicial philosophy was more important than his race, and, of course, they were right. Republicans might remember this when they turn to the nomination of James Wynn Jr., a black judge who would tip the Fourth Circuit to the liberal activists. If Clinton wants to put more women and minorities on the bench, perhaps he can renominate the ones rejected by Senate Democrats during the Bush administration.

■ The AFL-CIO's early endorsement of Al Gore came shortly before the trial of former Teamsters official William Hamilton, on six felony counts, began. Gore's most enthusiastic union supporters—Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—were involved in funneling illegal contributions through the Democratic National Committee to the campaign of former Teamsters president Ron Carey to lead the union. The Department of Justice contends that it is conducting an "ongoing investigation," precluding the need for an inquiry by Congress. But the investigation has so far been invisible. In exchange for its organizing muscle in the Iowa caucuses and its ability to turn out the minority vote in New York and California, the AFL-CIO surely expects the Clinton-Gore Justice Department to continue its gentle treatment of corrupt union bosses. How's that for collective bargaining?

■ Stories on Robert A. Mundell's Nobel prize in economics focused on his analysis of common currency areas, which underlay the establishment of the euro. This was doubly unfair: first, because the euro has bad political consequences that economists are not competent to address; second, and most important, because Mundell's greatest gift to the field is to have laid the groundwork for supply-side economics. In the 1970s, economists believed that unemployment could be kept down by moderate doses of inflation, and that inflation could be kept down by high tax rates. In the Ford and Carter administrations, the remedy nearly killed the patient, as inflation, unemployment, taxes, and the deficit all rose together. Mundell, Arthur Laffer, and a coterie at the *Wall Street Journal* advocated tight money and low tax rates. A 15-year boom (interrupted by a mild nine-month recession) ensued, and the deficit has vanished. Mundell, having put several trillion in our pockets, well deserves the million that accompanies his prize.

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■ Mundell's mix of tight money and low tax rates could be a balm right now for the stock market, which fell in mid October, its investors worried by signs of rising inflation and by Alan Greenspan's warning that they might be underestimating their risks. The Fed chairman has fretted before that the stock market might be rising too fast. His pronouncements have been confusing, since he has not explained whether he is proposing that the Fed at some point try to restrain stock prices. That confusion has now become dangerous. The inflation signals, while not conclusive, are clear enough to justify reining in the money supply. This would not necessarily restrict growth, if Congress and the president cut taxes. But investors would be less jittery if they knew that the Fed were acting not to move the markets but to achieve price stability—its more appropriate function.

■ In 1998, the gambling lobby won simultaneous victories in Alabama and South Carolina, when voters tossed out anti-gambling governors. A turn of the wheel has now produced contemporaneous defeats in the same states. First, Alabamians rejected a new state lottery in a referendum. A few days later, the supreme court of South Carolina ruled that video poker is illegal under existing law and that a planned referendum on the subject could not go forward. Gov. Jim Hodges, who ran as a supporter of video poker, pronounced the issue dead. Conservatives will be ambivalent about private gambling, balancing the potential of moral corruption and social pathology against the case for laissez faire. About the Alabama vote, however, there is no reason for regret. Proponents of state lotteries always say that they will improve the schools and lower taxes, but these hopes are usually dashed. Gambling feeds, after all, on the promise of unlikely returns.

■ President Clinton's just-announced plan to preserve up to 55 million acres of national forests, banning timber harvesting on those acres, will undoubtedly drive many small timber companies out of business. It will also condemn many of America's forests to burn. This year has already been fiery: As of October 14, 79,000 wildfires had consumed over 5.1 million acres. Yet this is only a sign of worse to come, according to a study by Robert Nelson, a former Interior Department analyst now at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. Years of fire-suppression policies, combined with declining timber harvests, have turned the national forests into tinderboxes. An estimated 40 million acres are at risk of catastrophic fire in the next several years unless timber is removed, either by prescribed burns or by harvesting. By locking up millions more acres, and barring the removal of timber for any purpose, the Clinton-Gore administration is adding more fuel to the eventual fires.

■ One treaty down, one to go. In the wake of the defeat of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the administration is scrambling to reach an agreement with the Russians on amending the ABM treaty. The administration is required by law to decide next year whether to deploy a national missile-defense system. A decision to go ahead would violate the treaty, a Cold War relic. The administration is therefore offering the Russians its typical assortment of ill-advised inducements: (1) a restrictive definition of defense systems that would ban a missile-defense system with any significant space-based components; (2) further mutual reductions in strategic offensive weapons, probably to a low enough level to bring whoops of joy from China, which is aggressively *increasing* its arsenal; and (3) sweeteners such as financial aid for building a radar station in eastern Siberia, and access to U.S. early-warning data. Talking with the Russians need not be harmful, since the missile threat to us and our allies today comes primarily from rogue states and China. But the administration, with its imprudent concessions, is plunging headlong toward another treaty showdown with Congress. Chairman Helms, over to you.

■ A British court ruled that former Chilean strongman Augusto Pinochet could be tried for torture in Spain. Lady Thatcher blasted the move as a "judicial kidnap . . . which would do credit to a police state." Here is why. First, *gross bias*. Jack Straw, the left-wing home secretary, has declined to prosecute an 87-year-old British woman who spied for the Soviet Union in Britain, but an ailing 83-year-old foreigner who crushed Communism in his own country can be sent to a second foreign country for trial. Jack Straw will never move against Fidel Castro. Second, *bad law*. "States," said an Amnesty International activist, "are acting as agents of the international community in enforcing international laws." But there is no international community, only ambitious international lawyers. Rights are founded in nature, but they are meaningfully exercised only in the nexus of the nation-state, where citizens can have some hope of impact on their governors. Third, *ingratitude*. No small country will ever help Britain again, as Pinochet's Chile did during the Falklands War. Fourth, *imprudence*. No authoritarian will ever give up power again, nor will his associates allow it to be given up after his death. Spain, under these circumstances, would still be Falangist—which makes Spain's actions in this farce all the more myopic.

MR. INSIDER

On the inside looking out,
Al's begun to fret about
Bill and his annoying grin
On the outside looking in;
Al would much prefer to be
On the outside; but, tee-hee,
He's stuck with the other Bill
On the inside of the sill.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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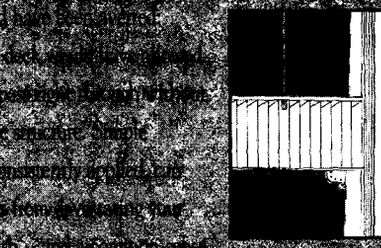
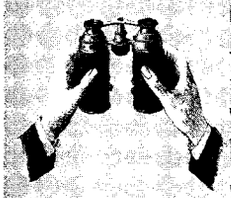
FORESIGHT LEADS TO RESULTS

If the designers of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge had given [illegible] disaster could have been averted.

Holes in the deck would have allowed the wind to pass through rather than damaging the structure. Simple principles, consistently applied, can prevent taxes from devastating your family's wealth -- and a common-sense investment philosophy can help to [illegible] the financial climate changes.





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■ The Israeli government made many a bright plan for the Millennium in the Holy Land, and one of them was to open up a plaza in front of the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. On this site, according to tradition, the Archangel Gabriel told Mary that she was expecting Jesus. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are expected imminently, among them Pope John Paul II. They, and he, will walk into one of those storms which illuminate the Middle East and the wider issue of religious faith. A small mosque stands on the land earmarked for the plaza. The Nazareth city council has a majority of Communists and Islamic fundamentalists, and this strange alliance voted to put up a temporary prayer tent, with a huge permanent new mosque to come, at a cost of $20 million, paid for by the Gulf states. The result has been six months of rioting between Christian and Muslim Arabs, with Jewish Israelis caught in the middle. Fearful of provoking Islamic violence, the relevant Israeli ministers have now decreed that a new medium-size mosque will stand in a diminished plaza. The compromise enrages both Muslims and Christians, especially the Vatican. The Pope may stay home. King Solomon, where are you?

■ The news about double-murderer O. J. Simpson is routinely either outrageous or comical. A couple of weeks ago, Simpson, in Miami, dialed 911: His girlfriend (or a friend of hers—it's unclear even now) was strung out on cocaine. Could the police come? They did. When they got there, Simpson and his girlfriend were in the middle of what Simpson characterized to police as a "verbal dispute." The police handed this admitted wife-beater a brochure on domestic violence, as required by state law. Then—here's the thing—those same two police officers asked for autographs and posed for pictures with Simpson. When they got back to the station, apparently flourishing their memorabilia, they were placed on desk duty. They are now the subjects of an investigation. The continuing presence of Simpson among us, of course, is a constant reminder of one of the great legal and cultural travesties of our time. The correct treatment of Simpson, in the absence of repentance, would be shunning. In the meantime, those Miami desk officers should be forced to gaze at photos, not of their hero Simpson, but of his victims: Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

■ Dr. Jake McNeil, a character on CBS's *Chicago Hope*, uttered the S-word, "sh**," in prime time. All the usual people said all the usual things in reaction, so it should be no surprise when the usual result of a discrete coarsening ensues: "Sh**" will become ubiquitous in two years' time, along with "f***" and all its friends. Is this a big deal, after seven years of the Clinton presidency? No. But neither is it no deal at all. And it was so preventable.

■ France's mayors have picked heartbreaker Laetitia Casta as the new model for national symbol Marianne, and all of a sudden Uncle Sam looks even more knobby than usual.

NATIONAL SECURITY

A Just Defeat

On October 13, the Republican majority in the Senate performed a huge service to the country and world: It said no to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Held by that treaty, the United States would have had an uncertain nuclear deterrent, and that would have been a scandal: Not only this country, but the very stability of the world has relied on that deterrent. The Republicans need not be shy or embarrassed about what they did. They should be holding their heads as high as they have ever held them during the Clinton administration.

The Republicans, as usual, have done a poor job of explaining their position. After the defeat of the treaty, they tended to look at their shoes, muttering about procedural matters and complaining about the Democrats' attacks on them (which were indeed abhorrent). They should have explained unapologetically to the public why the treaty was harmful to American interests (and ultimately, of course, to world interests). It is no easy thing to oppose something called a "treaty": It is a warm, reassuring, noble-sounding word. It signals the end of hostilities, or an agreement among nations, or the dawn of a brighter era. Indeed, polls indicate that a majority of Americans supports the treaty—and the Democratic party, led by the administration, is milking that fact for all it's worth.

The arguments against the treaty are many, neatly summed up by Jeane Kirkpatrick in her testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. First, we Americans take treaties seriously. When we sign something, we mean it. Many other nations, of course, feel no such compunction—and the United States would have been derelict to sit on its hands while other nuclear powers (among them such charmers as China and North Korea) went ahead and tested. Second, the treaty is unverifiable. The CIA has acknowledged that it is unable to detect certain nuclear tests. Third, it is necessary to test a nuclear arsenal to ensure that it is in working order. It seems odd to say that we must test to have a "safe, reliable" deterrent—but it is no less true for that. And fourth, that "safe, reliable" deterrent is now as important as ever, when the "nuclear family" is growing, in deeply disturbing ways.

Nor was putting off the vote a responsible option. The Vienna Convention states that once a nation has signed a treaty (as the administration signed the test-ban treaty in 1996), it is essentially bound to the treaty's purpose, until such time as it is formally voted down. To have returned the treaty to committee would have been the worst of both worlds—the United States would have had to abide by the treaty while Democrats condemned Republicans for not ratifying it. In other words, to have delayed the vote would have been only a slow walk toward ratification.

The reaction of Bill Clinton to the Republican victory was truly appalling. Just when you think you have seen Clinton at his lowest, he outdoes himself. "The whole thing is politics," he griped—mistaking the Republicans' disposition for his own. He accused the GOP of "reckless partisanship" that "threat-

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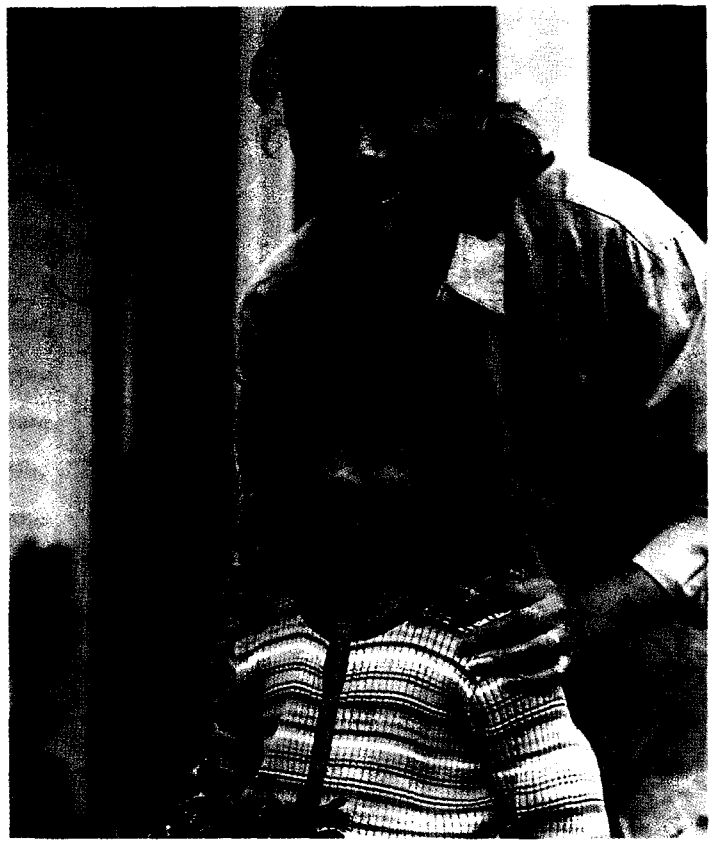

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From left to right:

Mary Kay Bennett,
Victim's Advocate

Sarahrose Snyder, Survivor

Heather Thompson,
Victim's Advocate

Hope House,

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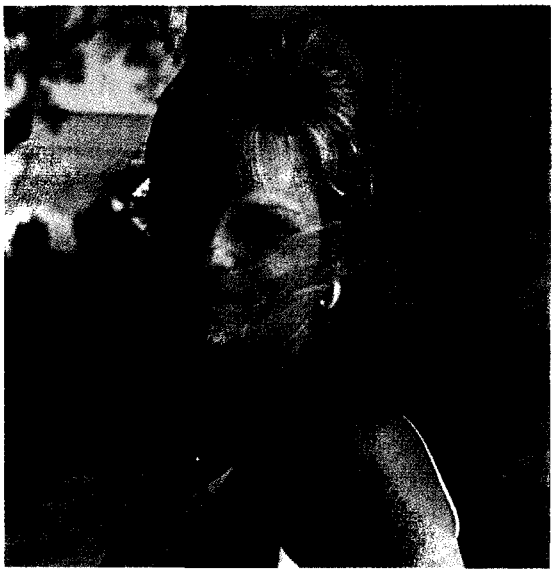
"With their help, I survived domestic violence. Now I can dream again."

When Sarahrose Snyder took refuge at Hope House, a domestic violence shelter, she found the support she needed to survive. With help from victim's advocates like Mary Kay Bennett and Heather Thompson, Sarahrose regained her dignity and discovered a new future.



Hope House is one of the many community-based organizations supported by *Doors of Hope*, an initiative of Philip Morris Companies Inc. in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund. *Doors of Hope* helps to provide emergency shelter, food and clothing to survivors of domestic violence, as well as job training and long-term counseling.

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ened . . . our national security." He whispered to foreign ambassadors that they should inform their governments that he was locked "in a battle with the new isolationists in the Republican party." He claimed that the Republicans were "betting our children's future"—ah, the children!—"on the reckless proposition"—ah, "reckless"! He must have had the word test-marketed—"that we can go it alone, that . . . we should bury our heads in the sand behind a wall." His extraordinarily dimwitted press secretary, Joe Lockhart, summed up the Democratic line: "The titanic debate that's gone on over the last several years within the Republican party has finally been settled in favor of Fortress America—isolationism."

The charge of isolationism against the treaty-defeaters is so absurd as to shock. Jeane Kirkpatrick, for one, was forced to leave the Democratic party in large measure because she is not an isolationist. Henry Kissinger opposed the treaty, and, of the many, many things he has been called, he has never, before now, been called an isolationist. John Deutch, Clinton's own former deputy secretary of defense and CIA chief, for heavens' sakes, opposed the treaty. So did the likes of James Schlesinger, Richard Lugar, and Brent Scowcroft. You remember Scowcroft's war, don't you? The one in the Persian Gulf? Virtually all Democratic senators—most of whom are still there—voted against that war. And they are the ones, many of them, who now deign to tar Scowcroft as an isolationist. If they could feel shame, they would be writhing from it.

In truth, the Democrats were not only outvoted, but outargued and outreasoned. They also had a hypocrisy problem: Given the record of this administration, they could not with credibility talk tough against nuclear proliferation. The world, unfortunately—think of China alone—has been aswim with such proliferation for the last several years. What the Republicans understood, and the Democrats did not, is that American security, and the peace of the world, depend on American strength. Not on arms-control treaties—but on American strength. And one of the benefits of this strength is that it makes possible those treaties that are truly effective. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is not one of them. In rejecting it, the Republicans, we are delighted, grateful, and mildly surprised to say, were superb.

Ding-Dong, the Treaty's Dead

It was a famous victory.
For once, Lott's Senate GOP
Left Sandy, Madeleine, and Bill
Pop-eyed, P.O.'d, and sounding shrill.
In India and Pakistan,
Where China is the bogeyman,
It's hard to find a test-ban fan.

—W. H. von Dreele

CAMPAIGN 2000

W. and the Right

THE GOP is not in the habit of holding early straw polls in Gotham, but the reactions to George W. Bush's education speech before the Manhattan Institute continue to reverberate.

Conservatives and the media focused not on the substance of the speech but on an introductory flourish that seemed to kiss off most of the Right. "Too often, on social issues, my party has painted an image of America slouching toward Gomorrah. . . . Too often, my party has focused on the national economy . . . speaking a sterile language of rates and numbers, of CBO this and GNP that. . . . Too often, my party has confused the need for limited government with a disdain for government itself." On the basis of that riff, Steve Forbes called Bush "embarrassed by the basic principles of his party," while Gary Bauer accused him of telling conservatives, "I don't need you." Bush tacked a bit the next day, declaring that he was critical only of mistaken images "that our party must battle," but the effect was undercut by an aide who told reporters the correction was an obedience-school technique: "After you hit a dog, you pet it."

On its merits, Bush's attack was partly justified. It is wrong for social conservatives to overdo gloom: both because despair is a sin and because intractable pessimism limits one's effectiveness. (Bush need not, however, have played off *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, the title of a bleak book by a good man, Judge Robert Bork.) Bush is right, as well, to note that neither Capitol Hill shop talk nor accounting tables captivate voters; Ronald Reagan succeeded in pushing arcane economic doctrine because he spoke about effort, incentive, and hope. But Bush also attacked straw men. To criticize the Department of Transportation or Education is not the same thing as joining a militia.

Still, Bush's comments would not have angered conservatives if they had not followed by just one week his criticism of the Republican Congress on welfare. In that context, it became impossible to dismiss the possibility that the attack on conservatives was itself the message—a signal to GOP fainthearts, and to liberals, that W. is not the prisoner of conservatives. The unnamed aide who made the canine comment suggested as much. The mainstream press agreed, seeing the speech as Bush's mirror image of Bill Clinton's 1992 swipe at Sister Souljah, though the differences are revealing: Clinton took Sister Souljah on when he was running behind even Ross Perot, when the move was necessary, if cynical; Bush is jabbing conservatives while he is sitting on a big lead in the polls and a huge financial advantage. If he didn't need to do it, does that mean he enjoys it? If it was not Bush's intention to distance himself from conservatives, on the other hand, this episode should teach him that the media will take every chance to suggest that it is.

William Saletan suggested in *Slate* that Bush's maneuver was designed to create geographical, not ideological, distance: The

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points he seeks to avoid are the opposite sides of Beltway confrontations, between Al Gore's administration and the Republican Congress. Most of Bush's speech was devoted to improvements in education at the state level.

Fine—so long as Gov. Bush remembers that the Republican nominee will be fighting, not an atmosphere, but a Democratic opponent. If the GOP candidate is to win, he will have to take the fight to his rival. Whether it is Al Gore or Bill Bradley, there will be much to criticize: racial demagogy, feckless foreign policy, military unreadiness, insincerity and half-measures on social reform. If Gov. Bush is to be the candidate, and the victor, he will have to take shots at the Left, not at Judge Bork.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

We Band of Traders

Is NAFTA about to change its full name to North Atlantic Free Trade Area? This looks like an idea about to enter the realm of serious politics. Steve Forbes, speaking in London last week, raised the prospect of Britain and Ireland joining the present NAFTA. Making a case very similar to that argued last year in London by Conrad Black, the Canadian newspaper magnate, he pointed out that the EU's drift to centralized regulation was damaging to Britain's successful post-Thatcher economy. NAFTA would suit the British and Irish better because it is based on the Anglo-American tradition of free trade, free markets, and free movement of capital. For this to happen, of course, the two countries would need to negotiate a much looser relationship with the European Union, which would be anathema both to Dublin's pro-Brussels politicians and to Tony Blair's Labour government. But the Tories have just adopted such a renegotiation as opposition policy.

Other straws in the wind: The distinguished historian Robert Conquest, writing in the current *National Interest*, contends that Britain's membership in NAFTA might be a useful first step towards an Association of English-speaking Nations that would strengthen American power in the coming multi-polar world. And Strobe Talbott complained that the European defense identity proposed by Brussels might divide and weaken NATO.

All this takes place against a background of growing American apprehension that the united Europe the U.S. has supported unwaveringly since 1950 might turn out to be a rival rather than an ally—and that therefore we must explore other options. One might be extending NAFTA membership to the new pro-market (and pro-American) democracies of Eastern Europe, which the EU is unlikely to admit to full membership for a very long time, maybe forever. Another might be a full-scale Transatlantic Free Trade Area, binding the EU to NAFTA. But common ties of history, language, and economic philosophy make Forbes's idea of a U.S.-Britain-Canada link the most natural and workable alliance. It also has the dubious distinction of being the only extension of free trade supported by Pat Buchanan. Hey, that makes it unanimous!

OBITUARY

Edward C. Banfield, R.I.P.

One by one, the intellectual giants who helped shape American conservatism in the latter half of the 20th century are leaving us. With Edward C. Banfield's death at 83, conservatism lost a profound student of American politics, one of the most influential social scientists of the age, and a discerning critic of liberal optimism and self-congratulation.

Banfield was a political scientist who insisted on asking large and unfashionable questions. His formative years were spent at the University of Chicago, where he had gone to study the politics and economics of planning with Rexford G. Tugwell, one of the New Deal's biggest brain-trusters. Banfield wanted to know why so many of the New Deal's agricultural experiments had failed. He found the answer not in the programs' implementation but in the planners' assumptions. They had not calculated the unintended consequences of their actions, the ripple effects of change in a complicated economic and political system, the inability of reason to dictate social reality. Ed developed these themes as a scholar and teacher at the University of Chicago, where he was a friend and colleague of Leo Strauss and Milton Friedman, and later at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard.

His greatest book was one of his earliest, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, published in 1958. Researched and written with his wife, Laura, the book asked why a hilltown in southern Italy, where Ed and his family had spent nine months living among and interviewing the inhabitants, was so poor. The answer, he found, lay in the villagers' refusal to trust, and hence to cooperate with, anyone who was not a member of their immediate family. Because of this "amoral familism," as Ed called it, they would remain fatalists rather than eager citizens and entrepreneurs. No amount of economic planning or income redistribution could solve this moral problem, only slow cultural change. Banfield thus raised a classic question—What makes civil society possible?—in a new and powerful way. Confirming insights of Hobbes, Tocqueville, and Fustel de Coulanges, Banfield uncovered the non-rational, habitual, and cultural roots of human association, proving again that "brain-trusters" trust the human brain too much. His own work has found echoes among recent writers on "social capital."

Banfield's most controversial book, *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis*, became a bestseller in 1970. His thesis was that every human city is imperfect and that the worst threats to decency and happiness in American cities come precisely from "enlightened" efforts to build heaven on earth. Mayor Daley's Chicago and other "machine" towns functioned better than cities reformed by goo-goo professionals. Yet *The Unheavenly City* was far from bleak: It acknowledged that in many ways the quality of life in American cities had improved over the past century, and (unusually for Ed) even proposed some ways to improve matters further. His crit-

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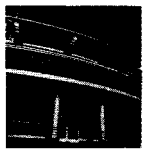

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ics, predictably, noticed only his devastating attacks on Great Society programs. Unable to refute him, they settled for impugning him viciously in all manner of settings, including his own classroom.

The Unheavenly City has stood the test of time, however, and many of its conclusions on race, crime, and welfare are now accepted even by liberal writers who lament the existence of an urban "underclass." But Banfield saw it first, describing a "lower-class culture" whose members were so "present-oriented" that they lived mainly for immediate gratification and impulsive adventure. The result, not easily changed, was an urban landscape littered with drug use, fatherless families, and random crime.

Ed was a luminous opponent of modern rationalism who didn't expect to be loved by its votaries, and wasn't. They thus confirmed his rather dark view of human nature. But he loved his wife and children, and he loved his friends and students, almost all of whom remained close to him and would often visit the Banfields at their 18th-century farmhouse in Vermont, where they spent summers. It was there—where he was accustomed to being his most amiable, skeptical, and cantankerous self—that he passed away, surrounded by family and friends. To all, and especially to Laura, his wife of 61 years, we offer our sincerest condolences.

—CHARLES KESLER

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In your column "Godforsaken Books" [July 12], you cite a volume by Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, in which appears the unsightly neologism "aliteracy." It is evidently derived from Greek and Latin in untutored fashion.

Other words of mixed Greek and Latin derivation that make a linguistic scholar wince are "amoral" and "asexual."

The alpha privative prefix was a productive feature of ancient Greek. But why in modern times combine "a" with Latin stems? Greek has the word *gramma* (letter) and sports the term *agrammatos* (without learning, unlettered). "Cultural deficiency" can also be expressed by the word *apaideusia* (want of education). The Greek *paideia* is what is needed.

Sincerely,
Lloyd B. Urdahl
Rochester, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Urdahl: Oh, come on. Language moves, and the movers care not at all if, in search of a useful word, they commit a little etymological miscegenation. And don't say anything against Mr. Vanderbilt because his book, *The Making of a Bestseller: From Author to Reader*, is splendid and authoritative.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Am I correct that you are in favor of the government keeping a record of guns sold, and to whom? How reassuring to know that the next Craig Livingstone and Janet Reno will know what firearms are in my possession. In 1685 James II promulgated a ban on firearms ownership by the Irish. Is that where you are heading? Have you no memory, man?

John McClaughry
Kirby, Vt.

Dear Mr. McClaughry: The government's primary responsibility is to protect the lives of its citizens. Therefore, the police need such aids as are useful in tracking down aggressors. These include fingerprints, Social Security numbers, passport numbers, and, yes, gun-registration numbers. The balance between privacy and protection is always changing; see, e.g., airport procedures. The time to start shooting at the policeman is not when he is engaged in enforcing the law but when he is engaged in tyrannical practices.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: You have been in politics for a long time and have influenced a lot of young conservatives, myself included. I wonder who in history was an influence on you or made an impact on your life.

Sincerely,
John P. Burgus
Glen Ellyn, Ill.

Dear Mr. Burgus: I am a Christian, so how would you think I'd answer that question?

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: This morning was a particularly pleasant day when I actually had time to stroll from my office to the post office. In my mail, I found a letter from NATIONAL REVIEW, which I have read for a number of years and enjoyed receiving and reading. On the front of the envelope were the words, "It's come to our attention that this NR subscriber may be trying to *outsmart* us," along with an arrow pointing to my name. I am totally puzzled as to the reason for this calumny. I found this remark to be odious in the extreme and would appreciate knowing what act I have taken in an attempt to outsmart NR. In good conscience, can I continue to receive and read this interesting magazine published by persons who believe I am trying to outsmart them?

Very truly yours,
Charles E. McCarty
Fifth Judicial Circuit
Spencer, W.Va.

Dear Judge McCarty: You have to believe us, Your Honor, we had no intention of suggesting you could outsmart us, notwithstanding your international reputation as the smartest judge in the whole U.S.A.!

Cordially, —WFB

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■ CAPITOL HILL ■

Test-Ban Ban

How the treaty went down

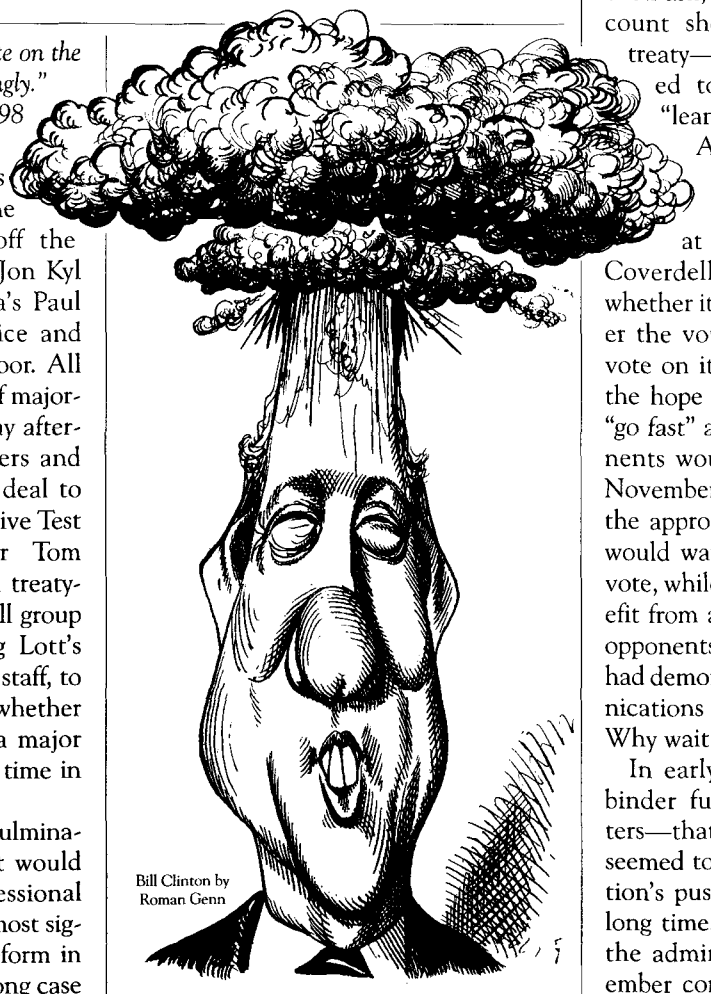
RICHARD LOWRY

"If we had a hearing and had a vote on the CTBT, we would win overwhelmingly."
—Sen. Joe Biden, July 29, 1998

JESSE HELMS mounted his motorized cart and left the Republican cloakroom, just off the Senate floor. Arizona senator Jon Kyl was right behind him. Georgia's Paul Coverdell got word in his office and immediately headed out the door. All were converging on the offices of majority leader Trent Lott late Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 12, as Senate staffers and others buzzed of an imminent deal to avoid a vote on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Minority leader Tom Daschle had just offered Lott a treaty-saving agreement. Now the small group of Republicans—after clearing Lott's cramped conference room of all staff, to ensure privacy—would decide whether the Senate would vote down a major international treaty for the first time in 80 years.

Their decision would be the culmination of months of work, and it would determine whether the congressional wing of the GOP would win its most significant victory since welfare reform in 1996. They knew they had a strong case on the merits. Defeating the treaty would, among other things, fit into a two-pronged national-security strategy featuring both missile defense and nuclear deterrence; deterrence is impossible without a safe, reliable American arsenal of the sort that the treaty would endanger. Shrewd GOP tactics and a series of Democratic miscalculations had brought the treaty to the brink, and now the senators were back where they had started—around that conference table—pondering whether to push it over the edge.

The first meeting in Lott's office had been in late April, when those same four began a quiet, well-organized effort to



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

defeat the treaty. Kyl was the point man. A bright, serious-minded conservative and an authority on arms control, he had hosted meetings of anti-treaty staff as early as February. Soon after, he enlisted the help of Coverdell, always an important behind-the-scenes Senate player. Treaty opponents realized from the beginning that they would be wise to learn from their defeat on the Chemical Weapons Convention two years earlier, when Lott undercut them at the last minute. The first lesson? Get Lott on board early.

At the April meeting, Lott indicated his opposition to the treaty but said that no decisions could be made until the group determined how many Republicans were with them. So, in early May, treaty opponents began the first in a series of careful "whip checks" of how GOP senators intended to vote. They gave wide berth to senators who were likely to support the treaty or might spread word that something was afoot. "There were 15 to 20 members we didn't even ask," says a Senate aide. The first count showed 24 votes against the treaty—10 short of the number needed to stop it—with another 11 "leaning against."

Around this time, an internal debate among treaty opponents was close to resolution, at least in the minds of Kyl and Coverdell. The question had been whether it was better to "go fast"—gather the votes to defeat the treaty, then vote on it right away—or "go slow," in the hope of bottling it up forever. The "go fast" advocates figured treaty opponents would only lose strength as the November 2000 elections neared. With the approach of Election Day, senators would want to avoid *any* controversial vote, while the White House would benefit from additional time to hammer its opponents. The chemical-weapons fight had demonstrated the awesome communications power of the administration. Why wait for it to shift into gear?

In early August, Lott was shown a binder full of clips—op-eds and letters—that supported the treaty, which seemed to indicate that the administration's push for it was underway. For a long time, treaty opponents had feared the administration would use a September conference commemorating the third anniversary of the treaty's signing as a deadline for Senate action. A July 20 letter from all the Senate Democrats—demanding hearings and a vote by October—seemed to confirm this plan. A fall treaty fight would coincide nicely with the period in which Republicans would be scrambling to pass appropriations bills. Democrats would have leverage to threaten to bollix up the spending process—creating the conditions for another "government shutdown"—unless Republicans released the treaty.

Lott settled on a three-part interim strategy: 1) Helms—with 25 years' experience opposing ill-conceived

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arms-control treaties—would continue to hold up the treaty in his Foreign Relations Committee; 2) meanwhile, influential former national-security officials would continue to be lined up in opposition to it; and 3) Kyl and Coverdell would continue to work the vote count. By the time of a Sept. 14 meeting in Lott's office, Kyl could guarantee 34 votes in opposition—just enough. He could also deliver the energetic help of former secretary of defense (and secretary of energy) James Schlesinger.

Before long, the education effort by treaty opponents was in full swing. Kyl's staff prepared briefing books to distribute to other Senate staffers. Two nuclear-weapons experts who had worked in the labs briefed senators both individually and in small groups. And Schlesinger, who had served in both Republican and Democratic administrations, spoke at a luncheon for Republican senators, then returned for more briefings the following week. "He was key to us," says the Senate aide. The effort began to show in the steadily rising vote count: Sept. 14—34 opposed; Sept. 17—35; Sept. 22—38; Sept. 30—an amazing 42.

At the same time, Democrats heedlessly stepped up their agitation for action on the treaty. North Dakota senator Byron Dorgan was threatening to tie up Senate business, getting under Lott's skin. "They were a huge influence on the decision to say, 'Okay, let's just hold this vote,'" says Coverdell about the Democrats. On Sept. 28, Biden showed Helms a resolution that he planned to offer, proposing hearings on the treaty this year and a vote by March 31, 2000. Biden's ploy seemed to indicate that the Democrats now planned to raise the temperature on the treaty in the spring, when it would get enmeshed in the presidential campaign and discomfit George W. Bush. As a result, Lott decided to move. He quietly reassured Biden that his resolution would be unnecessary.

On Sept. 30, Lott offered a "unanimous consent" agreement—all senators have to sign on to such an agreement for it to go into effect—to bring up the treaty for an immediate vote. Daschle objected, charging that, among other things, there wasn't enough time for debate. Lott gave the Democrats the additional time they wanted, and on Oct. 1 Daschle lent his support to a new agreement. There would be a vote on the treaty within two weeks. Every Democrat in the Senate had endorsed the timing—and this was a mistake of major proportions.

Why did the Democrats do it? In part, they were trapped by their own rhetoric: Gleeful GOP staffers had a sheaf of statements from Democrats demanding a treaty vote this year. How could they back out now? They were also probably unaware of the direness of their situation. "It was plain arrogance," says Kyl. "They didn't have any idea they wouldn't win." Democrats also might have figured that they could, if necessary, cut a last-minute deal with Lott to avert a vote. The final days of the treaty fight featured a panicked Democratic effort to reverse course and do just that, even as the vote count against them continued to mount: Oct. 1—43 against; Oct. 7—45.

Lott was still open to avoiding a vote, but only if he could get an ironclad agreement from the Democrats that it would not come up again for the duration of the Clinton administration. It was this possibility—and the wiggle room the administration would surely find in any such deal—that had treaty opponents on edge. "We were nervous until the vote took place that something was going to sidetrack it," says Arkansas senator Tim Hutchinson. On Oct. 12, Daschle sent Lott a letter proposing to shelve the treaty, barring "unforeseen changes." Lott promised to run it by his members. Hence the call that brought Helms, Kyl, and Coverdell dashing to Lott's office. Daschle's staff was already telling reporters that a deal was at hand, prompting yet another treaty opponent, Oklahoma's Jim Inhofe, to sprint to Lott's office unbidden.

Kyl, Helms, and Coverdell huddled with Lott over Daschle's proposal. What did "unforeseen changes" mean? Coverdell thought it was a "glaring escape clause." The consensus of the group was that it was unacceptable. "We couldn't have had a more calm, considerate discussion," says Kyl. "Lott didn't need to be persuaded or harangued in the least." There was a brief discussion of going back to the Democrats with a draft of a foolproof deal. But it dawned on everyone that any deal would be impossible. The Democrats weren't serious, and some Republicans were unwilling to go along no matter what. Inhofe, arriving at Lott's office, emphasized just that. The only way out, as one Senate aide puts it, would have been "an internal Republican bloodbath."

So, the next day, all systems were go. Lott firmly rejected a last-minute floor attempt by Democratic lion Robert Byrd to place obstacles in the way of a vote. Byrd threw a fit—to no avail. It was too late. Republican senator John Warner was running around the floor, still gathering signatures on a letter asking that the vote be put off. Again, too late. President Clinton called Lott, asking if there was anything he could do. Replied Lott: Too late. When the floor debate was concluded, 51 Republican senators voted down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the face of international pressure, the opposition of the White House, and hostile media.

Surprising? Well, yes. "I thought we had 50," says Jon Kyl. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH ■

'Affable, Polite and Sincere'

The murderer as celebrity

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

'HIS voice is nasal and singsongy, full of flat Chicago vowels. He is 57, his hair and beard trimmed close . . . He makes constant eye contact, laughs easily and often; when it's time for a photograph, he jokingly pops out a fake front tooth, as if to parody the deranged mountain-man image he inhabits in the public's mind. He is, for the most part, affable, polite and sincere."

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Guess who? Well, he's clearly a celebrity, and a pretty easygoing democratic one at that, if we judge by the way he affably parodies his public image. Willie Nelson perhaps—there's a touch of the "mountain man" about him. No, Nelson's voice is hardly "full of Chicago vowels." Maybe Kris Kristofferson—there's a touch of the "*deranged* mountain man" about *him*. No, those Chicago vowels again.

Baffled? The correct answer is: Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski.

What, still baffled? The Unabomber, of course. You remember him. He's the one who became famous for mailing package bombs to suspected scientists, killing three people and wounding 23 more. The quotes come from an interview with him in *Time* magazine, the bible of the commuting classes.

Kaczynski is in demand at present. His interview with *Time* was advance publicity for his book, *Truth Versus Lies*, forthcoming from a New York publishing house. He has just written a short story for a literary magazine at a university in upstate New York. And according to *Time*, he has graciously accepted the request from a major university library that he donate his personal papers to its archive of anarchist literature.

This status is reflected even in prison. Kaczynski lives on "Celebrity Row." His cell has television, and he has subscriptions to the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *National Geographic*. (I can almost hear the sigh of relief down at *The Nation*.) The prison food is "pretty good." And he mixes with such prisoners as Ramzi Yousef of the World Trade Center bombing and Timothy McVeigh (who recently lent him *Tainting Evidence: Inside the Scandals at the FBI Crime Lab*). Interestingly, Kaczynski doesn't think of these companions as "criminal types . . . They're considerate of others . . . Some of them are quite intelligent."

It is especially interesting that he should exempt McVeigh from the charge of being a mere criminal (or in the wry lingo of Belfast, an "ordinary decent criminal"). For, contrary to the Clinton spin and most reporting on the Oklahoma bombing, McVeigh was not a right-wing anti-government radical tuned in to Rush Limbaugh. His letters to a local paper showed that he had a number of left-wing, environmentalist, and "animal rights" opinions, such as opposition to factory farming. If he was anti-government, it was not in the measured political tradition of a Thomas Jefferson or a Ronald Reagan, but in the paranoid-obsessive style of a fan of *The X-Files*. And since Kaczynski is in the grip of a dull, nerdy, and more systematic version of the same folly, they naturally get on.

It used to be that men convicted of vile and premeditated murders disappeared into the shadows of a penitentiary, never to be heard of again until they either died or sought to atone for their crimes in some dramatic way, like the Birdman of Alcatraz. Nowadays a murder conviction—for the right kind of murders, naturally—looks like a smart career move. As Stephen J. Dubner, who conducted the interview for *Time*, reports neutrally, the Unabomber is marked "by a satisfaction that the world, at long last, is treating him like a valuable human being."

■

As Orwell pointed out, evil as a career strategy is especially tempting to those with great ambitions and only modest talent.

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It had to happen, of course. Our celebrity culture was bound to swallow even murderers at some point in its omnivorous binge. Besides which, it was always hard for the aging post-radicals from the 1960s who now run our major cultural institutions to regard Kaczynski as a criminal in the first place.

For goshsakes, he'd been to Harvard.

The commissions for his new book and short story, the library request for his personal papers, the *Time* interview itself—these are all messages in code, sent at such a high frequency that even the senders themselves do not always pick up their thin bat's squeak of an implication: Although the Unabomber had to be imprisoned on the technical charge of murder, that does not really make him a criminal. No, he is a brave soul who got lost on a spiritual journey, one of us, perhaps better than we, someone who was misled by idealism into violence and may therefore have something to teach us.

Like the young women radicals who disappeared in the 1960s after shooting a cop during a bank robbery and who, when the FBI pick them up 20 years later, turn out to be comfortable hausfraus locally famous as fundraisers for National Public Radio, he may have to do time. But he should not be treated as a mere criminal.

And as we have seen, *Time*, publishers, university libraries, even the prison authorities—in short, society—all draw this fateful inference.

In doing so, we invite more of the same—more self-righteous murderers, that is. Acts of outrageous wickedness have always been a ticket to fame. Herostratus burned down the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, one of the most beautiful buildings in the Ancient World, so that his name would be always remembered in History. He has achieved his ambition—we know his name (though the American educational system may eventually frustrate his amoral calculation).

As Orwell pointed out in his essay "Benefit of Clergy," moreover, evil as a career strategy is especially tempting to those who have great intellectual or artistic ambitions with only a modest technical talent to sustain them. Most of the works at the "Sensation" exhibit currently packing them in at the Brooklyn Museum demonstrate the utility of wickedness as a substitute when imagination is lacking, at least in a world without art critics. To judge from his sludgy repetition of worn-out Luddite ideology, the Unabomber was similarly handicapped: Murder was the only literary device available to him to make his prose more interesting. (As it happens, one of his victims, David Gelernter, writes some of the most elegantly readable prose in modern American writing.)

But what makes wickedness appealing to us, the readers, the voyeurs? It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a frank avowal of evil has some kind of twisted sexual force. Stalin was at least as wicked as Hitler, but he wore a hypocritical mask of proletarian virtue, with the result that Communism has never imprinted itself on our collective imagination as the epitome of evil. Nazism—with its theatrical evocation of violence

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in black uniforms and torchlight rallies—has come to symbolize not only political evil but also sado-masochistic perversity. And there are more topical examples of this connection between violent sex and political violence.

Thus, when *Vanity Fair* ran a profile a few years back on the semi-retired terrorist Gerry Adams, the author noted (in the course of much swooning of her own) that Adams attracted groupies: "Women throw themselves at Gerry Adams, I was told. 'I've never noticed,' Adams deadpanned. 'Now I know you lie in interviews,' I say."

It is surely significant that repentant murderers and terrorists, such as Sean O'Callaghan (who left the IRA, informed against it, and then pled guilty to charges that carried a life sentence) never attract this kind of gushing coverage. They have forsworn the qualities —brutality, cruelty, callousness, imperviousness to morality or the opinions of others—that appeal to the side of human nature that is both weak-minded and dark.

Until now, such instincts have been kept in check—those of most of us by decent restraints in popular culture, those of the potential murderers-for-fame by the prospect of anonymity as well as life imprisonment. Publishing the Unabomber undermines both restraints. We may not want to acknowledge the fact, but the only reason for reading what he writes is that he was once free to murder people.

It therefore follows, as Conor Cruise O'Brien argued when he opposed interviewing terrorists on television, that publishing him and his works is an incitement—to other murders, by other frustrated cranks. **NR**

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■ THE LAW ■

The Fall of France

What gay marriage does to marriage

DAVID FRUM

THE argument over gay marriage is gradually ceasing to be a theoretical one. Over the past decade, Canada, Denmark, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden have created one form or another of domestic-partnership arrangement for the benefit of homosexuals. On Oct. 13, France joined the trend by enacting a law that confers the legal advantages of marriage on cohabiting homosexuals. In doing so, it demonstrated in the most spectacular way possible just what it is that opponents of gay marriage are so worried about.

What France has adopted actually and inevitably falls a little short of full wedlock for homosexuals. Only the Scandinavian countries have yet dared go that far, and they could do so only because of their peculiar religious situation. The Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish established churches are controlled by the state to a degree unmatched outside the old Communist bloc. The government promotes ministers to bishops, allots the churches their budgets, and even has power to legislate the contents of the prayerbook. When Denmark became the first country on earth to adopt gay marriage in 1989, the Danish Lutheran Church instantly knuckled under. The Norwegian Church acceded to the Norwegian state in 1993, and the Swedish Church did the same in 1995.

The French government possesses nothing like that sort of power over the French Catholic Church. Nor are the French people as highly secularized as the people of Scandinavia. So when the Socialist government of Premier Lionel Jospin took up the subject of gay marriage two years ago, it understood it had to tread warily. To apply the word "marriage," with all its sacramental associations, to a form of union condemned by Catholics might provoke a dangerous political reaction. France's increasingly numerous and assertive Muslims would probably not like it much either. So rather than confront religious sensibilities, the government—like those in the Netherlands and Canada—decided to avoid conflict through euphemism.

It would create a new legal status for homosexuals, analogous to marriage, but not exactly the same, called a "civil solidarity pact." Couples linked in civil solidarity pacts would file joint tax returns, receive all the welfare and

by Roman Genn

employment benefits of spouses, and enjoy the inheritance rights of husbands and wives. If a French citizen entered a pact with a non-citizen, the non-citizen would become eligible for citizenship in exactly the same way as the non-French husband or wife of a French citizen. In order to qualify for all of these advantages, a couple would need only to appear before a court clerk and sign on the dotted line. Either partner could

Mr. Frum is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

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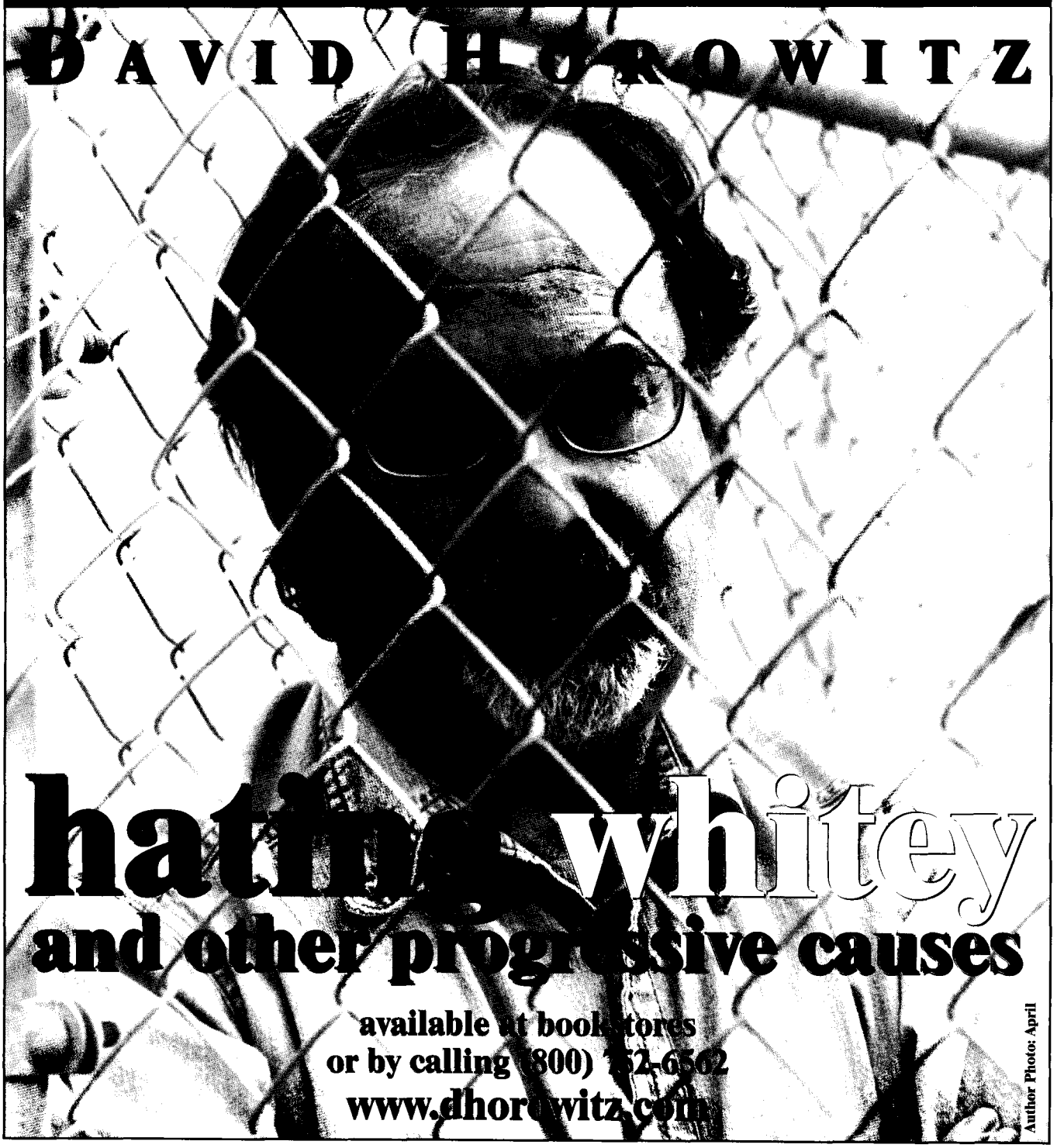
—Thomas Sowell

DAVID HOROWITZ



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end the pact by providing three months' notice in writing.

Such pacts are obviously very convenient things, and it rapidly became evident that one way to mitigate political opposition to them was to make them available to just about everybody. After two years of haggling, the benefits of the pacts have been extended to cohabiting heterosexual couples, to widowed sisters living together, even to priests and their housekeepers. The French have crafted a grand new alternative to marriage, one that offers almost all of marriage's legal benefits and imposes many fewer of its

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There is every reason to expect the new pact gradually to crowd out the institution of marriage.

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legal obligations. Given French society's already growing distaste for the institution of marriage (about a million French heterosexual couples live together unwed), there is every reason to expect the new pact gradually to crowd out and replace marriage. It's a familiar story in the history of the evolution of law. Once upon a time, a contract became a contract only if it was sealed with wax in an elaborate ceremony. Then courts began to recognize less formal written and oral contracts as nearly equally binding, and soon the old form disappeared.

In this case, however, the disappearance of the old form imposes consequences on innocent third parties: children. Already, 40 percent of France's children are born outside marriage. The cohabiting couples who have these children may imagine that they are providing their children a home just as stable as that provided by marriage, but they are deluding themselves. In France, as everywhere else, the average cohabitational relationship lasts about five years. Apologists for cohabitation praise it as a less burdensome alternative to marriage; the truth is that it is a near-certain prelude to fatherlessness.

What has all this to do with gay marriage? Everything. The argument over gay marriage is only incidentally and secondarily an argument over gays. What it is first and fundamentally is an argument over marriage. Unless a government is sufficiently powerful and disdainful of religion to crush the objections of the local churches—and few governments are—gay marriage will turn out in practice to mean the creation of an alternative form of legal coupling that will be available to homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. Gay marriage, as the French are vividly demonstrating, does not extend marital rights; it abolishes marriage and puts a new, flimsier institution in its place. Proponents of gay marriage freely borrow analogies from the civil-rights movement. But we are not talking here about throwing open the country club to people of all races; we are talking about bulldozing the country club and building something entirely different in its place.

The gay-marriage argument is only the latest round in an argument over marriage and the family that began some 35 years ago. It pits defenders of marriage against those who condemn it as stultifying and oppressive. It pits the wishes of adults against the needs of children, the urgings of the self against the obligations of family. As such, the argument is a much more evenly matched battle than a gay–straight fight would ever be. The battle has been lost in France and Scandinavia. It is well on the way to being lost in Britain and Canada. And it is very much in danger of being lost in the United States. **NR**

■ **POLITICS** ■

The New Mexico Maverick

Gov. Gary Johnson, libertarian star

JOHN J. MILLER

"IN running for office during my first term, I offered up the fact that I smoked marijuana. And the media was very quick to say, 'Oh, so you experimented with marijuana,'" recalls Gov. Gary Johnson, Republican of New Mexico. "No, I *smoked* marijuana. This is something that I did. I did it along with a lot of other people. But me and my buddies, you know . . . we enjoyed what we were doing."

The scene is a drug-policy conference at the Cato Institute, and the auditorium is packed. The audience is think-tank bohemian: bearded drug-policy wonks, open-collared legalization advocates, and a few plain old potheads. One reporter from *High Times* magazine has dyed his hair green and asks about CIA drug trafficking. For just about everybody in the room, Johnson is a hero. He receives standing ovations coming and going. And his line about the pleasures of weed meets with raucous approval.

Talk like that started turning heads over the summer when Johnson let it be known that he had decided to make drug legalization a major theme of his second term. On October 7, federal drug czar Barry McCaffrey made a special trip to Albuquerque to condemn him. "This is goofy thinking," he said, also calling the governor "an embarrassment." In joining the war on the war on drugs, however, Johnson is hardly alone: Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, former secretary of state George Shultz, and Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura are also critics. Yet only Johnson appears

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eager to make legalization part of his legacy. He is probably the most high-profile drug legalizer to hold office today.

Then again, Johnson would earn cheers from libertarians no matter what his views on drugs. He has tried repeatedly to cut taxes, and has had modest success, despite a state legislature run by old-school Democrats. In the six years before his first election, the state government grew by about 10 percent annually. Johnson has cut that rate by more than half, and trimmed about 1,200 jobs from the Santa Fe payroll. He has vetoed 550 bills, which he boasts is more than all other sitting governors combined. That number includes two state budgets last spring, which Johnson nixed because they didn't include school vouchers. He threatened to shut down the government, but eventually gave up in the face of unified Democratic opposition and doubts among rural Republicans.

"Veto Johnson," as some in New Mexico have dubbed him, is a citizen-politician; he was not involved in public life at any level before seeking the GOP nomination in 1994. Outside of Albuquerque business circles, nobody had heard of him. He self-financed his primary campaign, and went on to beat an incumbent Democrat. He has said over and over that he won't seek another political office. And he certainly won't get a job in a George W. Bush administration: In July, he became the only governor to endorse Steve Forbes for president. Activists in the Libertarian party, in search of their own Ventura-like miracle, have talked about drafting Johnson for a White House run. "I'm very flattered," he smiles, "but I'm a Republican."

Johnson, 46, was born in snowy North Dakota, but he's all New Mexico now, right down to his turquoise wedding ring. With his narrow face, close-cropped hair, and lean build, he looks like Steve Largent, the wide-receiver-turned-congressman from Oklahoma. Johnson too is an athlete, with skin that has turned orange from long hours outdoors. He is a hang-gliding, ski-jumping, sky-diving rock climber who has reached the summit of Mt. McKinley. He marked the anniversary of the Bataan Death March with a 25-mile desert run in combat boots while wearing a 35-pound backpack. He has competed in a 100-mile, 30-hour race that makes the traditional marathon look like a cakewalk. And on October 23, he will participate in Hawaii's invitation-only Ironman Triathlon Championship—for the third time. Johnson expects to complete the race—2.4 miles of swimming, 26.2 miles (a marathon) of running, and 112 miles of biking—in less than eleven hours. He plans to climb Mt. Everest on leaving office at the end of 2002.

Johnson's flamboyance sometimes spills over into his politics, as when he said that wife-beaters should be "soaked in honey, staked on a red ant hill in Texas, and shown on national TV." He once suggested planting microchips in the brains of criminals. As for abortion, he's one of those politicians who say they're personally against it but wouldn't be comfortable outlawing it—yet local pro-lifers love him. "He backs every piece of legislation we're for," says Dauneen Dolce, of the Right to Life Committee of New Mexico. That includes "parental consent," "informed consent," and bans on assisted suicide, partial-birth abortion, and Medicaid-funded abortion. Johnson didn't win the group's endorsement in 1994, but got it four years later.

Gov. Gary Johnson
by Roman Genn

A serious man as well as a free spirit, Johnson speaks with the earnestness of an infomercial actor. His speeches

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Drug interdiction, Johnson maintains, clots the legal system and yanks resources away from more important kinds of law enforcement.

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sound like pleas propelled by force of logic, as if he genuinely doesn't understand how reasonable people could disagree with him if they just spent enough time thinking about the subject. His remarks can turn amusingly Socratic, with Johnson asking himself skeptical questions and then providing sharp answers.

This pattern of thought clearly led Johnson to what he calls his "outrageous hypothesis": the notion that the drug war not only has failed, but has actually made matters worse. Drug interdiction is a costly diversion, he says, clotting the legal system with minor criminals and yanking resources away from more important kinds of law enforcement. "The goal of our entire drug policy, I think, should be to reduce drug use among kids . . . and adults, for that matter," he said recently on ABC's *Good Morning America*. He envisions a regime in which the government taxes, controls, and regulates narcotics, as it does alcohol. Sale to minors would be prohibited, and businesses would be free to test their workers (which Johnson has done for years at his construction company, which now employs more than 1,000 people). He knows this is no panacea. "Under a legalized scenario, there's going to be a whole new set of problems," he said at Cato. "But I suggest to you that those new problems are going to be about half the negative consequences of what we've got today."

Johnson speaks powerfully as a former

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user—not an "experimenter." He was a prolific dope smoker and an occasional cocaine snorter in the 1970s. "Don't do drugs," he says again and again. "I'm not pro-drug." Yet that's a hard message to sell when he also criticizes the Partnership for a Drug-Free America's "This is your brain on drugs" campaign: "I really do envision advertising that actually tells the truth, which says, 'You know what? Drugs are kind of nice and that's the lure of drugs. The reality is that you continue to do drugs and that they are a real handicap.'" While that may not qualify as a pro-drug statement, technically, it is not quite anti-drug, either. And this is what he had to say about cocaine to the *Dallas Morning News* in September: "You know why people do it. It's wonderful. Whoaaa! Whewwww!"

Just about every elected Republican in New Mexico opposes Johnson on the issue. "His stand on drugs is absolutely despicable," says state representative Ron Godbey. Adds John Dendahl, the state GOP chairman, "This is a distraction. We're taking our eye off the ball of school choice and tax reform." Yet some Republicans are privately sympathetic, and Johnson is convinced he can shift public opinion. A September poll had only 37 percent of the public agreeing with his position on drugs, but his approval rating was up five points.

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If his drug-legalization effort lights up grassroots support, plenty of people will ask him to run for Senate.

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When Johnson first sought office, he came out of nowhere. "Not one person asked me to run for governor—not one person," he likes to say, a surefire applause line in speeches. If his drug-legalization effort lights up the kind of grassroots support Johnson thinks is out there, plenty of people will ask him to challenge Democratic U.S. senator Jeff Bingaman next year. And if it doesn't, his political career may be over—which doesn't seem to bother him. "This is my last political office," he declares. And, as with everything else he says, he appears to mean it. Strongly. **NR**

■ **POLICY** ■

Grass Roots

The progress of medical marijuana

RYAN H. SAGER

If you think legalizing medical marijuana would be a *Reefer Madness*-style catastrophe for society, don't tell Oregon grandmother Stormy Ray. For Ray, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1985, Oregon's legalization meant something entirely different: Instead of being forced to use a harsh, legal medication—one that left her in a constant haze—she can now gain pain relief much more easily. Medical marijuana, she says, "has literally saved my life."

Ray is just one beneficiary of a growing state-by-state movement to give patients with illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, and AIDS legal access to the drug. The legalization drive began in 1996, when voters in Arizona and California approved the first medical-marijuana initiatives. In 1998, voters in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska jumped on the bandwagon by passing their own initiatives. All of these laws protect patients from state prosecution for marijuana possession, as long as they obtain a doctor's recommendation.

The California model has proven extremely successful in keeping patients out of trouble with the law. As Chuck Thomas of the Marijuana Policy Project explains, fewer than one out of 70 marijuana-possession cases are handled at the federal level. This means that the main concern of patients is with how state law will treat them. "Fortunately," says Thomas, "the federal government really doesn't have the resources to go after patients." While a few patients have found themselves facing federal charges, these cases have usually involved large amounts of illegally grown marijuana. In general, if you are a legitimate patient in an initiative state, chances are you will face little risk if caught growing or possessing a small amount of marijuana.

This is a big step forward. When California and Arizona passed their initiatives, enraged politicians in Washington, D.C., called for a crackdown on the rebellious westerners. The Clinton administration denounced the new laws, and Utah senator Orrin Hatch convened a special hearing of the Judiciary Committee to condemn them. At the hearing, Hatch lambasted the Arizona initiative as the work of "pothead doctors . . . [who] want to legalize drugs," and DEA officials proposed a plan for a crackdown. This plan would form the nucleus of official policy: Any patient using marijuana, and any physician prescribing it, would face federal prosecution; the physicians, in addition, would lose their drug licenses and might even be banned from Medicare and Medicaid.

This response, immediate and harsh, was designed to show the states who was boss. Unfortunately for the drug warriors, however, it was also too Draconian to survive court scrutiny. Four months after the policy was announced, a federal district court forbade federal prosecution of the doctors. This left prosecutors facing the logistical Everest of cracking down on individual patients, which would require the cooperation of state law-enforcement officials.

In California, attorney general Dan Lungren—a vehement medical-marijuana foe—found he was unable to go after individual patients, so he mounted an aggressive campaign against the still-illegal "buyers' clubs." While state law allows patients to possess marijuana, it does not allow them to buy it, sell it, or grow it in large quantities—though all these things were being done on a large scale before California passed its initiative. Previously, the clubs had gone unmolested, as local law enforcement looked the other way; but Lungren began an aggressive campaign of prosecutions.

Many of the clubs were shut down. Today, under the more sympathetic Gray Davis administration, some of the clubs are resurfacing; but the sad irony remains that after California voters

Mr. Sager is a reporter in *Reason* magazine's Washington, D.C., office.

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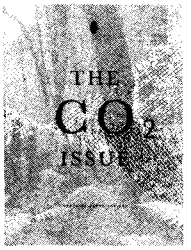
In his drive to frame the environmental debate, Vice President Al Gore believes, "Our insatiable drive to rummage deep beneath the surface of the earth, remove all of the coal, petroleum, and other fossil fuels we can find, then burn them as quickly as they are found – in the process filling the atmosphere with carbon dioxide and other pollutants – is a willful expansion of our dysfunctional civilization into vulnerable parts of the natural world." We have a more positive way of seeing things.



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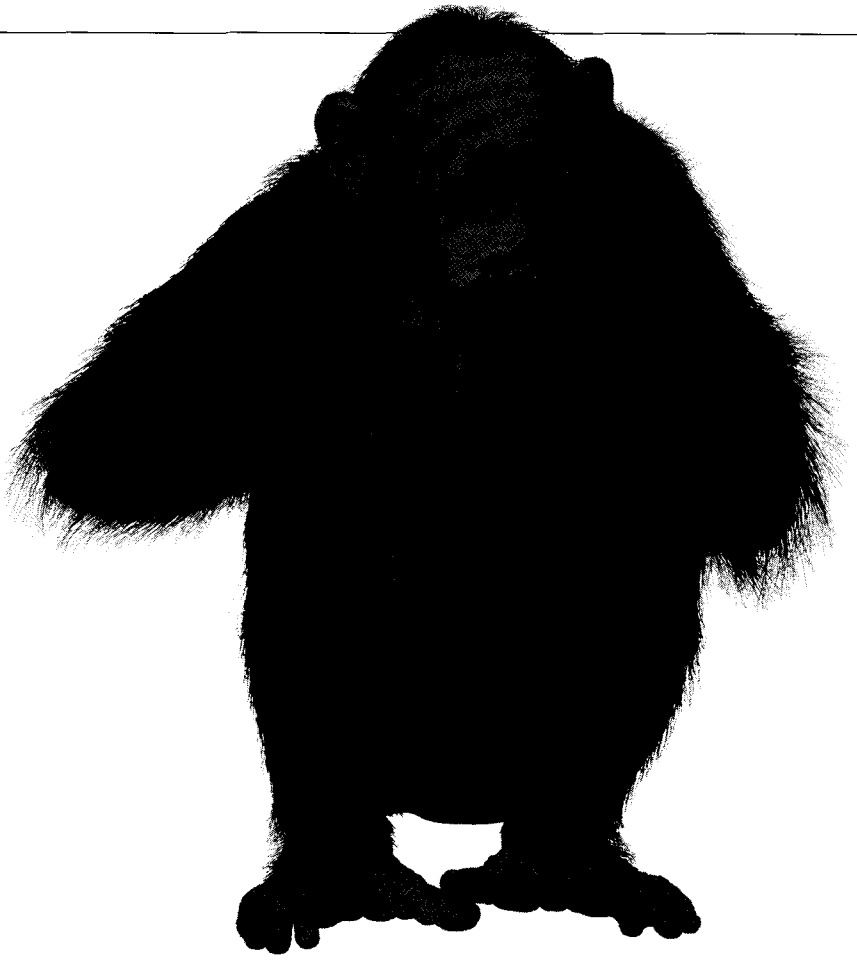

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gave patients much-needed legal access to marijuana, the politicians' response led to a decreased supply of the drug.

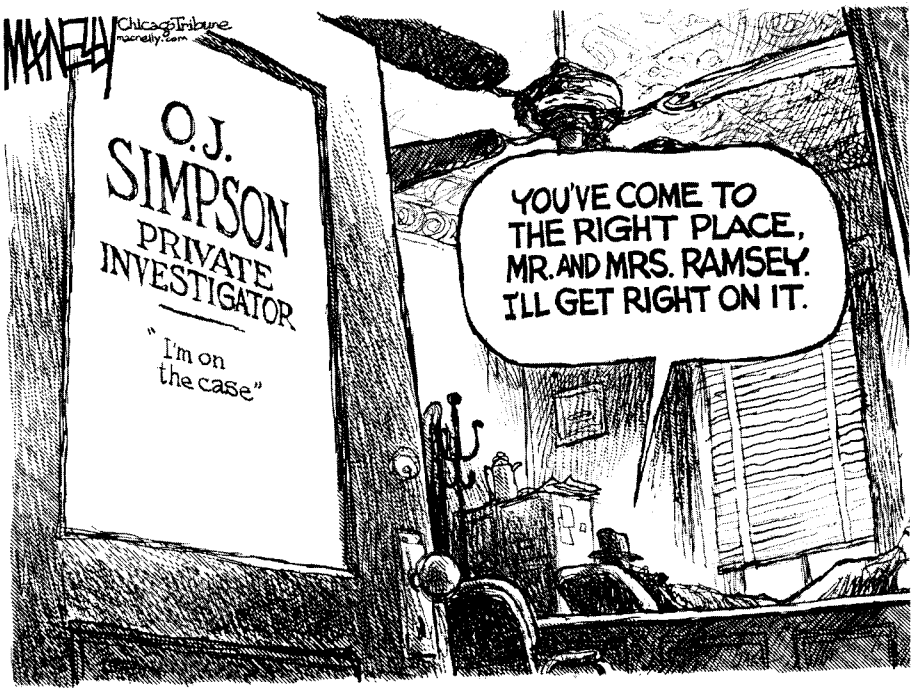
Despite these setbacks, voters and activists in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska were encouraged by the victory in California. And in these second-wave states, medical-marijuana legalization encountered a far different response than it had in the first wave: No reaction at all.

Clearly, the political tide is turning in favor of medical marijuana. Another state may be about to join the list of legalizers: Polls estimate support for Maine's November medical-marijuana initiative at 70 percent, and opponents of the measure have yet to organize.

Activist Chuck Thomas envisions a number of possible strategies for legalizers, after the Maine vote. One possible route is approval by the Food and Drug Administration; this proposal gained ground last March, when a report from the Institute of Medicine confirmed that marijuana has medicinal value. Another approach Thomas would like to see is a campaign for state legislation, which would be a less expensive fight than collecting the signatures required for a ballot initiative. Hawaii and Minnesota have recently come close to passing legislation—and Thomas believes these states may yet be won over.

While the drug warriors have become quieter, they have not disappeared, and some are mounting as vigorous a campaign as ever. "The American people don't want federal money used to hold a referendum on the use of mind-altering drugs," snapped Georgia congressman Bob Barr in November 1998, explaining why Congress should override the will of voters in the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C. (or, to speak more precisely, its political class, since D.C. voters approved a medical-marijuana initiative with a stunning 69 percent majority), has never taken kindly to the idea of marijuana as medicine. To them, the idea seems dangerous—and quite correctly so. It risks inviting the public to reconsider years of the drug-war dogma, which has labeled all illegal drugs unequivocally evil. A fresh look at this dogma would be a Pandora's Box that—once opened—could end up rattling the faith of the drug warriors themselves.

Stormy Ray, for her part, doesn't care what the politicians think. She is too busy watching her six grandchildren grow up. Asked what she would tell people in Washington, D.C., who try to keep marijuana out of the hands of patients, her answer is simple: "If they ever, God forbid, became ill, I hope they would never have to fight for these drugs like patients have had to in the past." **NR**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■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Where the Action Is

Reform and the states

JOHN HOOD

I KNOW George W. Bush is a shoo-in. What I can't figure out is why he would want it.

Why would he leave his current job in Austin—one of America's real hot spots for policy entrepreneurs—for the pompous and increasingly irrelevant national capital? I realize this is going against the grain, but the fact is, not much of substance is going to happen in Washington during the next few years. Well-organized interest groups, using new technologies for mass communication, are going to block fundamental tax reform and large-scale privatization of federal programs. Conservatives will have to adopt a gradual, piecemeal approach to taxes and spending. Nor will this be a particularly exciting process to watch, or to lead. Waterloo and Gettysburg were dramatic spectacles. The siege of the federal Leviathan will be long, grueling, and eventually stalemated. Pictures of its commanders will find no place in the history books.

No, the real action on the issues most Americans care about is in state capitals and communities. Governors and mayors, lawmakers and aldermen, initiative leaders and school-board members—these are the conservative revolutionaries of the next decade, if not the next century.

Take education. Most poll respondents (and most ordinary people I know) view it as by far the most important issue in which government has a significant role. Conservatives have for years talked about choice, competition,

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higher academic standards, phonics, and values. What has Washington done? Very little.

While Washington has sputtered and postured during the 1990s, state and local leaders have acted. Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson and former Ohio governor (now senator) George Voinovich, along with state lawmakers and mayors, were instrumental in setting up government scholarships for poor children in Milwaukee and Cleveland. Former Minnesota governor Arne Carlson created education tax credits and deductions statewide. On academic standards, George W. himself in Texas (along with other state officials, including some Democrats in my own North Carolina) deserves credit for setting up at least the rudiments of an effective system for evaluating and rewarding student performance.

All over America, state and local politicians have worked to set up charter public schools to implement the best educational ideas—phonics-based reading, non–PC history, discipline, merit pay, and accountability—with little interference from bureaucrats or unions. Florida governor Jeb Bush has taken reform even further, with a comprehensive package of standards, accountability mechanisms, and statewide school choice in low-performing districts.

On a host of other issues important to conservatives, the potential for decisive action lies outside the Beltway. Here's a short list:

Health care. Conservatives are finally getting their act together on this issue, but need to move from theory to practice. States will be excellent places to try out ideas such as expanded medical savings accounts and tax credits for the uninsured. Governors can also take the lead in reforming Medicaid along lines friendly to markets—and applicable, eventually, to Medicare. Many states really do have large surpluses with which to fund such experiments. (Its happy talk aside, Washington remains bankrupt by any sensible accounting standard: Its long-term liabilities are much greater than its current revenue estimates.)

Deregulation. As hopes for a comprehensive, market-friendly bill to deregulate financial services fade in Congress, state legislatures are grappling with what may well be the most realistic prospect for deregulation: electrical power. The power business—which has many times the annual revenues of the attention-grabbing telecommunications sector—may end up featuring a lot of consumer choice. Electricity restructuring, if it doesn't involve too many compromises, would mean a sizable tax cut for every American business and household (as well as a very visible success for free-market economics).

■

On a host of important issues, the potential for decisive action lies outside the Beltway.

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Economic opportunity. This issue still resonates, despite the last few years of Dow peaks and Internet zillionaires. Washington can't do much to promote broad opportunity other than cut taxes (and I'm not convinced it can do even that in a sensible way). But states and localities have a lot of room to maneuver. They can deregulate housing markets, break up professional cartels, rationalize outdated tax codes, and fix deteriorating roads and bridges. When Washington tries to help, it makes things worse. For instance, its pork-ridden highway bills hike construction wages to union levels, and fund mass-transit projects that would otherwise get the local ax.

The biggest potential for realignment may well be in the area of "Smart Growth," the latest name for local neo-Bolshevism and the snobby sort of environmental quackery popular in university enclaves. People who are looking for their first home in the suburbs (this group includes a disproportionate number of minorities, by the way) are the big losers when the Smart Growthers take over. A new generation of local conservative leaders can and should fight for the right of these individuals to a piece of the American dream. (Getting their votes may be a bonus.)

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Social policy. Whether it's racial preferences, bilingual education, abortion, or failing marriages, state and local venues are a more congenial setting for progress than Washington. The initiative process is one reason. A less hostile press is another. One of my favorite ideas came a couple of years ago from the state of Louisiana, where a libertarian means (voluntary "covenant marriage") was employed to pursue a traditional end (more family stability and fewer divorces) [see Maggie Gallagher's cover story, p. 38].

Government reform. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that states cannot limit the terms of congressmen. But they can limit legislative terms, and have done so. The early results are promising. Conservatives are starting to figure out that their adversaries gain a great deal of their power from government largess—whether it's liberal politicians sending corporate contributors on freebie "trade missions," or "unauthorized-practice-of-law" statutes that prop up the legal cartel and its political money machine.

In many ways, Texas typifies how conservative politics—and our political institutions more generally—can be rejuvenated outside of Washington. Gov. Bush has cut taxes by billions of dollars and championed tort reform. Texas is leading the way in pursuing academic excellence without regard to race or resources. The state legislature still meets in regular session only once every two years, thus limiting the influence of the state's political class. While the Texas governorship has relatively few formal powers, it offers tremendous opportunities to someone who wants to shape a cultural renewal in America's second-largest state through moral suasion, a sunny disposition, and a bedrock commitment to limited government.

The food, music, and culture of Texas are taking over the rest of the country anyway. Why, Governor, would you ever want to leave? So the nonstop scandal machine can chew up your friends? So young Texas Republicans can get the required few weeks of federal service before they become MSNBC commentators? Or is it to give Jay Leno new punch lines?

There's still time to reconsider. **NR**

■ CHINA ■

Look and See

Confronting the Chinese Gulag

JAY NORDLINGER

HARRY WU is a glorious pain, forever reminding the world of an awful fact: the existence of the "Laogai" system in China, or the Chinese Gulag. Wu knows a little about this. He spent 19 years in that system, having voiced criticism of Communist practices. He got out in 1979, and six years later came to America, where he went to work as a geology professor. But he could not, of course, forget Laogai and the people in it. In time, he chucked the teaching and dedicated himself to the task of reminding, reminding, always reminding.

He is now doing it with a little exhibit in Washington, D.C. It is called "Images of Laogai," and it includes photos that Wu himself took, secretly, during visits back to China. (He was finally caught in 1995, and held for 66 days, before being released to the U.S. authorities.) You'll find the exhibit in the Russell Senate Office Building. No matter how steeped you are in Laogai, or in anti-PRC matters in general, there is something about pictures—hardly an original thought, to be sure, but true. It's one thing to read about Laogai (or about Armenia, or Dachau, or Cambodia), another to see it.

The first photos are of the outsides of prisons. They don't look particularly sinister—they're just big, ugly prisons, like prisons all over. But when you realize who is in them, and why, they couldn't be more sinister. Wu's pictures have a decidedly homemade feel, right down to the computerized date in the lower right-hand corner. They might have been developed down at the corner store—and are all the more potent for it.

Accompanying the pictures are signs (also affectingly homemade) that say things like, "50 million people have been enslaved, tortured, and murdered within the walls of Laogai." That's a little bracing. Another sign says, simply, "A Living Hell." This is not normal imprisonment, insists Wu in his signs, but slavery. No photo is without its nugget, or homily, or point. Consider, "The vastness of the Chinese Laogai system, its unparalleled place in the modern world, the monumental number of its living victims, and its cruelty meets and exceeds that of its original model—the Soviet Gulag."

There are many such references to the Soviet system, testimony to Wu's continuing frustration that, while everyone knows the word "Gulag," relatively few know "Laogai." (Wu has expressed exactly that frustration in the pages of this magazine.) A "farm," one of the signs notes, was set up in 1950 (that early!) by "Soviet Gulag experts." Another sign informs us that Qinghai province is known (but not by enough) as "China's Siberia." "Gulag," as it happens, is defined in a typical English or American dictionary, "Laogai" not. We are confronted, once more, by the terrible fact that there aren't enough Solzhenitsyns to go around.

■

'50 million people have been enslaved, tortured, and murdered within the walls of Laogai.'

■

Before long, we see pictures with actual people in them. So there they are, the slaves, with their guards! That's what they look like, a few of them, at least, among the millions. In one photo, men are working in a field, without shirts. One of them looks at the camera. What could he be thinking? Certainly not that I'd be looking at him, here on Capitol Hill.

The next photo is about the most harrowing of the bunch: "Workers are forced to work naked in the chemical processing room of the Qinghai Hide and Garment Factory," where they soften animal hides. And there they are, the naked workers and the hides, horrifying. A book like Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's *China Wakes* will horrify you;

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this photo, alone, does almost as good a job.

The prisons, we learn, have a "dual identity," as both prison and factory. The Jingzhau Prison, for example, is also the Jingjiang Xinsheng Dyeing and Weaving Factory. Its products, we realize, are probably bound for us. We see pictures of the items that come out of these camps—slave-labor products—such as "Diamond"-brand tools. I feel a pang of guilt (or conscience): It's easy to ignore those "Made in China" labels. There are so many of them; they're so hard to avoid.

■

Jeane Kirkpatrick recalled a saying of Arthur Koestler: 'Statistics don't bleed; it is the detail which counts.'

■

Touring the exhibit, you get a clear sense of the tremendous, age-old thirst to document, to lay down, to put on record. You can all but hear Wu and his Laogai Research Foundation say, "See, see? Look, look! Here they are. This is what they look like. We told you so." The pictures are, quite simply, priceless, as precious to Wu, no doubt, as anything material could be.

We also see photos of public executions, carried out to "deter class enemies." We look at the first two Tiananmen Square demonstrators to be executed. They are not in any mass now, but alone, and about to die. We see "public-sentencing rallies," ghastly things, which may provoke a twinge of gratitude for the ACLU, not to mention the Constitution. Prisoners are being manhandled, strangled, by gleeful, zealous-eyed guards.

Then there are documents, yanked from the offices of Laogai, concerning its inmates. They bear the bold, red stamps of Communist officialdom, and because we know what they represent—inhuman judgments on innocent beings—they are chilling.

At last we come to a little gallery of people—photos of individuals who have survived Laogai. Each photo has a little bio underneath, of course unspeakable. There is a priest, confined for 33 years. (But we should name him, for the defeat of anonymity is a purpose of this effort: Cai Zhong Xian.) There is the Dalai Lama's personal physician, Tenzin Choedrak, long imprisoned, who would have been forced to break rock and so on indefinitely but for the "opportunity to treat and cure several high officials." There is a lovely, smiling lady named Ho Kailing, standing next to the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. The contrast between that serene face and that bio (horrid) is staggering.

And there is also—permit me one more—Liu Xinghu, arrested when he was 13 years old, for belonging to a family of "class enemies." Twenty-five years later, "he was simply told one day that the authorities had determined that he was not guilty of anything, and he was released immediately." A cruel system, and capricious.

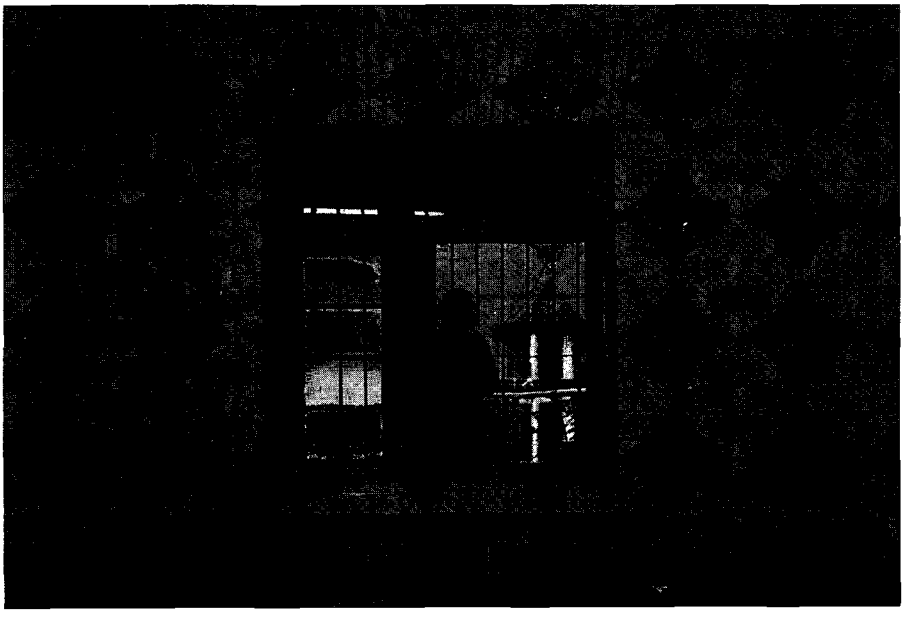
Liu's father, too, had been in Laogai. He served out his formal sentence, but was then confined further, as a "free laborer" (taunting designation). Despairing that he would ever get out, he committed suicide. His son was made to clean up the body and uniform.

As I looked into the faces of these people, I thought of a favorite story, involving Jeane Kirkpatrick. She was in Moscow, with other foreign-policy VIPs, and met with Andrei Sakharov, who had just returned from exile. He recognized the former U.N. ambassador immediately and said, "Kirkpatski, Kirkpatski! I have so wanted to meet you and thank you in person. Your name is known in all the Gulag." And why was it known? Because in her speeches she had cited the cases and fates of particular persons, had, so to speak, named names—which thrilled those in the cells and stirred those beyond them. We may not be moved by the plight of millions, but how about the plight of one, or two, or three? Speaking of this recently, Kirkpatrick recalled a saying of Arthur Koestler: "Statistics don't bleed; it is the detail which counts."

So Wu's humble display has an effect—as did the jarring and undeniable photos that emerged from the Holocaust; as did the pictures, shown two years ago at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, of the Cambodian genocide; as did the film *Harvest of Despair*, about the "terror-famine" (as Robert Conquest named it) in Ukraine. There is something about a picture, yes. Think of Anne Frank's face, on the cover of the diary—so fresh, so gay, as beautiful as any face that ever beamed! Six million died, true; but also . . . Anne.

Harry Wu and his allies have done a wonderful thing. In this era of "strategic partnership"—in certain respects shameful—they have thrown Laogai in our faces. They have reduced an overawing phenomenon to manageable size. They seem to say, "Here it is: Deal with it."

Can we? **NR**



An inmate of Hubei #3 Prison, secretly photographed by Harry Wu

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Even Drug War Advocates Agree:

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing is Bad!

Stephen G. Breyer, Supreme Court Justice

"Mandatory sentencing laws should be abolished."

Source: United States Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer, in a speech at the University of Nebraska College, November 20, 1998.

Barry B. McCaffrey, "Drug Czar"

" - mandatory sentencing ties the hands of judges too tightly and prevents them from exercising discretion and good judgment." "By revising these sentencing rules, our intent is to broaden support for our drug policies, restore respect for the law and foster a more effective division of responsibility between federal, state and local law enforcement."

Source: Prepared Remarks by Barry R. McCaffrey, director, Office of National Drug Control Policy Before the First Annual Criminal Justice and Substance Abuse Conference, Albany, New York, June 29, 1999.

Joseph A. Califano, Jr., President, CASA

" Laws that prescribe mandatory sentences for possession of small amounts of marijuana are overkill. In general, mandatory sentences, especially those requiring drug and alcohol abusers and addicts to serve their entire sentence, are counterproductive. We need all the carrots and sticks we can muster to help these individuals shake their habit. Mandatory sentences take away any potential that an early release might hold as an incentive for such an inmate to enter treatment. Such sentences also remove the leverage that parole offers to get recently released inmates to continue treatment and aftercare or face a return to prison."

Source: Joseph A. Califano, Jr. Chairman and President, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University on release of Non-Medical Marijuana: Rite of Passage or Russian Roulette? July 1999.

Let Judges *Judge*.
Let's not tie their hands.

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-5694, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org, www.csdp.org

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■ COVER STORY ■

Marriage-Saving

A movement for matrimony

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

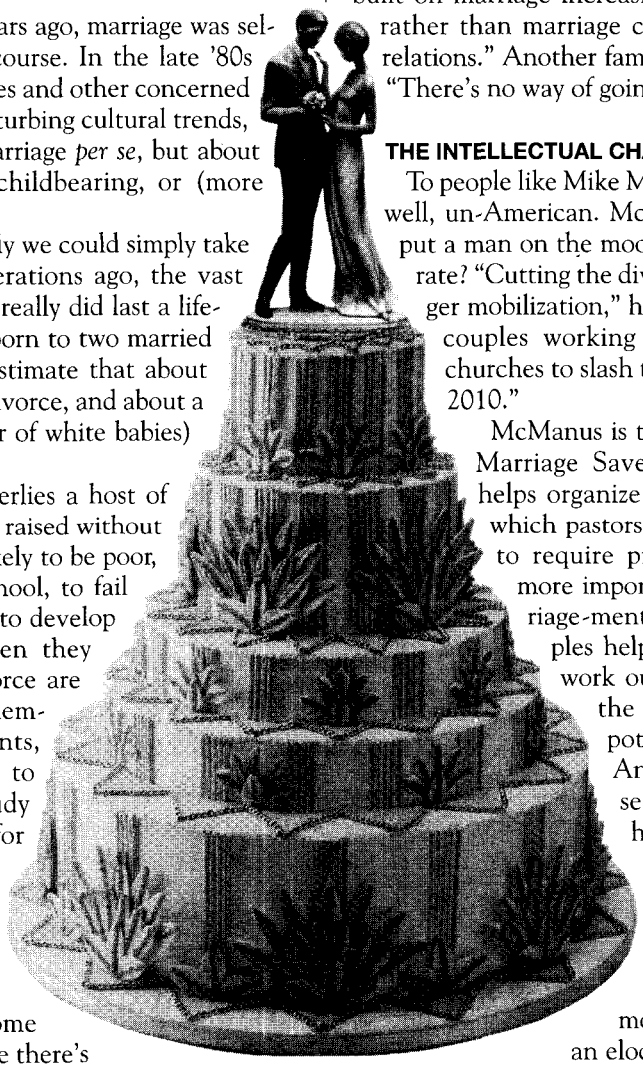
THE letter on my desk proposes a new Senate Task Force on Culture. Its goal? To "discuss pressing societal issues such as marriage, family structure and civic participation." Hold on! Did I read that right? Yes, there it is in cold print: the M-word, marriage.

This is something new. Ten years ago, marriage was seldom mentioned in political discourse. In the late '80s and early '90s, when conservatives and other concerned Americans wanted to discuss disturbing cultural trends, they usually spoke not about marriage *per se*, but about family breakdown, or unwed childbearing, or (more often) just welfare reform.

Then again, until quite recently we could simply take marriage for granted. Two generations ago, the vast majority of American marriages really did last a lifetime. Almost all children were born to two married parents. Today, demographers estimate that about half of all marriages will end in divorce, and about a third of all babies (and a quarter of white babies) are born to unwed mothers.

This decline in marriage underlies a host of troubling social trends. Children raised without two married parents are more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to drop out of school, to fail academically, to be abused, and to develop chronic health problems. When they become adults, children of divorce are more likely to get divorced themselves, to become unwed parents, and to commit crimes leading to incarceration. One recent study found that—even adjusting for race, income, and cognitive ability—boys raised outside of intact marriages are two to three times more likely to be incarcerated.

So marriage matters. But some despairing theorists say that since there's no way to strengthen marriage, the only answer is extensive new government transfer payments and social-work programs. "The increasing diversity and turnover in family life which largely emanates from partnership changes," family scholar Kathleen Kiernan has argued, "makes policy built on marriage increasingly problematic . . . Parenthood rather than marriage contracts should underpin family relations." Another family scholar, Arlene Skolnick, says: "There's no way of going back to where we were before."



THE INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

To people like Mike McManus, that sort of pessimism is, well, un-American. McManus has a Big Idea: If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we slash the divorce rate? "Cutting the divorce rate will require an even bigger mobilization," he says, "perhaps 2 million married couples working as mentor couples in 300,000 churches to slash the divorce rate in half by the year 2010."

McManus is the godfather of the church-based Marriage Savers movement. Marriage Savers helps organize community marriage policies in which pastors of different denominations agree to require premarital counseling and (even more important, in his view) create lay marriage-mentoring programs so that older couples help newly married or troubled ones work out their problems. McManus sees the Marriage Savers movement as potentially analogous to Alcoholics Anonymous, an elaborate, voluntary self-help movement that has at its heart one simple, powerful idea. As Abraham Lincoln put it, "When one, who has long been known as a victim of intemperance, [stands up] to tell of the miseries *once* endured, *now* to be endured no more forever, [there is] a logic, and an eloquence, in it that few with human feelings can resist."

Diane Sollee, too, has her own Big Idea. Sollee is the guru of the secular side of the new marriage-education movement. She quit her job with a marriage-therapy trade association to spread the word about what she calls a "new optimistic view

Maggie Gallagher is director of the marriage project at the Institute for American Values, and a nationally syndicated columnist.

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of marriage." Unlike marital therapists, marriage educators don't use the disease model. "You don't diagnose, you don't need to dwell on childhood traumas, you focus on trying to replace those behaviors that lead to divorce with better skills," says Sollee. Best of all, she claims, marriage education is cheap, because "anybody can do education. You don't even need a high-school degree, much less mental-health training."

Three years ago, this divorced mother of two grown sons helped fund the first Smart Marriages conference, which has since become the annual mecca of the marriage movement, drawing thousands of counselors, therapists, educators, activists, policymakers, and journalists each July. Sollee, too, has a vision of victory: "It sounds sappy, but my dream is to someday get on a plane, and there would be a woman sitting next to me whose daughter is getting married, and I'll say, 'What course did she take?' . . . Marriage education will have become part of the culture."

Katherine Spaht's Big Idea is already here. A key figure in Louisiana family law, she helped bring no-fault divorce to Louisiana in the '80s—and blanched at the devastation walkaway divorce wrought in the lives of women she knew. Two years ago, she helped draw up the nation's first covenant-marriage bill, which offers both existing married couples and newlyweds the chance to make a stronger legal commitment than that allowed by standard no-fault divorce laws. With the passage of covenant marriage, Louisiana became the first state (and Arizona quickly the second) to strike a blow, however partial and tentative, against the no-fault legal revolution, which had made divorce the unilateral and incontestable individual "right" of one half of a married couple.

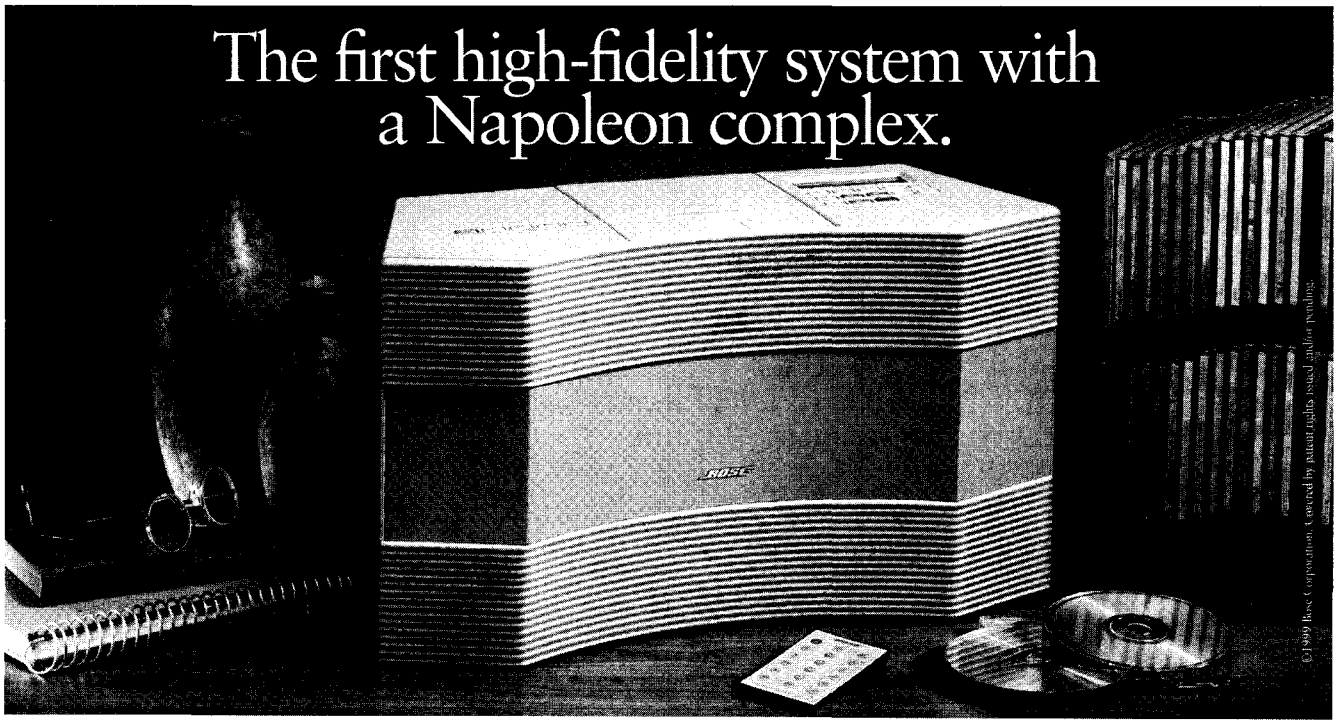
The marriage movement—if so grand a title can be applied to what is still a small group—is not necessarily a conservative one. When, for example, therapist Sollee met evangeli-

Katherine Spaht blanched at the devastation that walkaway divorce wrought in the lives of women she knew.

cal McManus back in 1995, she described herself to him as a humanist. "From his reaction, you would have thought I had said 'Satanist,'" she says, amused now at her naïveté. "To me, that meant humane, compassionate, somebody who cared about people."

COMMUNITIES TAKE THE LEAD

This movement is small, but it is growing rapidly. Marriage counselors tired of being "neutral" between fidelity and infidelity; judges doing their best to clean up the mess of broken marriages; state legislators who have noticed what high rates of divorce are costing their budgets—all are reaching the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conclusion that something must be done to lower the divorce rate, and reconnect marriage and childbearing.

In Arkansas, Gov. Mike Huckabee is sponsoring a conference on marriage education and mentoring. Kansas senator Sam Brownback recently sponsored a marriage summit. Utah has a new Governor's Commission on Marriage.

But so far, Oklahoma governor Frank Keating is the only governor to make reducing the divorce rate (by one-third in ten years) an explicit goal, and to invest in a long-term strategy for doing so. Unlike many conservative Republicans, Jerry Regier, Keating's secretary of health and human services, doesn't believe the bully pulpit alone can do the trick. "What government tends to do with this kind of issue," notes Regier, "is to compartmentalize it, to say [it's] the religious institutions' responsibility, we can't do much about it, we'll have a conference and talk about it and hope something happens. I believe religious institutions are primary, but in Oklahoma we are also developing a plan for media, education, business, and state agencies."

Politicians are finding that, as long as the focus is on building a better future, marriage is a shared aspiration.

To Michigan activist Dan Jarvis, the change in the political climate is palpable. "Five years ago, when [Michigan's] Republican caucus polled their members [on their priorities], no-fault divorce reform was ranked dead last. This time, it was one of the primary items discussed."

MARRIAGE A 'SPECIAL INTEREST'?

But the emergence of marriage as a public issue is not uncontested, even among conservatives. When, for example, social conservatives insisted that changes in the marriage penalty had to be structured in ways that did not discriminate against married homemakers, the *Wall Street Journal* launched an unusually intense attack: What pro-family groups wanted to do, an editorial charged, is create a marriage bonus, something "not materially different than what K Street lawyers did in Gucci Gulch—carving out one piece of the tax code for some loud interest's benefit."

Of course, few Republicans or Democrats go so far as to describe marriage as a special interest. Far more common is a sense of uneasiness. When New Mexico state senator Mark Boitano introduced divorce-reform legislation, some of his conservative colleagues demurred. He summarizes their reaction: "Listen, the government doesn't have any business interfering in people's personal lives." Even Chris Pyle—Gov. Huckabee's family-policy aide—hastens to say: "When it comes to strengthening marriage, government mostly needs to undo, rather than to do things."

This is certainly true, up to a point. No government program can compensate for the gaps and suffering created when mothers and fathers don't stay married. Nor can government wave a wand that will make couples get or stay married. On the other hand, marriage has never been, and is not now, an exclusively "private" relationship. The increasing privatization of marriage is a key legal and cultural factor contributing to our current marriage crisis. Law and society have always been involved in helping define and protect the boundaries of marriage: Men can extend their insurance benefits to their wives, but not their sisters, because law recognizes marriage as an economic union, not just an erotic one. You can dump your boyfriend, but not your husband, without a judge's order because marriage is a public, legal commitment, not merely a private, impassioned lover's vow. Marriage is an institution like private property—which is not created by government, but which, in order to thrive, must be recognized and protected by it.

When government fails to recognize the substance of the marriage union, in tax and welfare policies as well as in divorce law and other matters, it is effectively undercutting marriage. It is acting like a government that decides to remain "neutral" in disputes between the property owner and the thief, or between the breaker of a contract and the faithful executor of it.

And while some Republican leaders—including, so far, George W. Bush—avoid using the M-word, presumably for fear of sounding censorious, politicians who have talked about marriage have found it to be a much less divisive issue than pundits imagine. Too many conservatives have become stuck in "stigma discourse," convinced that there is no middle option between applauding irresponsibility and slapping scarlet A's on unwed or divorced mothers.

Activists within the marriage movement know better. They realize that welfare reform succeeded only when Americans realized that welfare dependence hurt not just taxpayers, but the poor as well. Similarly, the efforts to reduce divorce and unwed childbearing will succeed only when Americans understand that the goal is not the narrow one of imposing legal punishments for sexual immorality, but the broader strengthening of marriage as a positive social force.

Politicians who have begun to speak on this issue are finding that as long as the focus is on building a better future, marriage is a shared aspiration—a value that unites, not divides. I've interviewed dozens of single mothers, for example, and I've never met one who, when asked what she wants for her son, said, "I'd like him to impregnate his girlfriend and then move a hundred miles away." Most people acknowledge that divorce is sometimes a necessary evil, that some marriages don't deserve to be saved; but nobody marries hoping to end up divorced, and nobody, in the privacy of her heart, dreams of the day her daughter will become a single parent.

Anyone trying to define compassion or "compassionate conservatism" would do well to look closely at the marriage movement. What these activists are trying to conserve is the basic institution of compassion, one that sacralizes the compassion between lovers and then serves as a school of compassion for the children it generates. A big fight, to be sure; but one would be hard-pressed to think of a more crucial goal for public policy in the next century. **NR**

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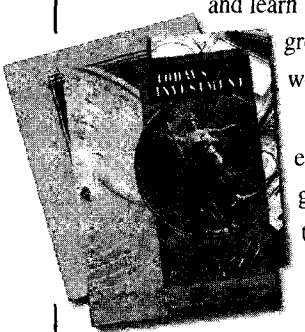

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'We Are All Clueless Now'

The eclipse of economics

RAMESH PONNURU

"I WANT to keep our prosperity going," said Al Gore in his June announcement speech, "and I know how to do it." He also promises to make the economy "fairer."

Some may detect a certain hubris here—though Gore at least didn't claim to have invented the economy. He has a wonderful knack for reversing the truth, as when, on Impeachment Day, he proclaimed Bill Clinton a "great president," or when he mistranslated *e pluribus unum* "out of one, many." His latest claim comes at the moment when, for the first time in decades, neither party has anything resembling a true economic policy.

Each party, of course, continues to have policies that it defends on economic grounds (such as free trade) or that will have effects on the economy (such as increasing the minimum wage). But there was a time when the parties also had a policy on the economy as a whole. From World War II through the '70s, Washington pursued a policy of stabilizing the economy with Keynesian economics, running deficits to stimulate the economy during recessions and surpluses to cool it down during booms. Deficits were, of course, easier for politicians to deliver than surpluses, but the theoretical consensus was strong and bipartisan, as evidenced by Richard Nixon's famous 1971 remark, "We are all Keynesians now." At the high tide of Keynesianism, its believers imagined that they could "fine tune" the economy so as to avoid any major ups and downs.

This consensus was upended by the "stagflation" of the '70s: Policymakers confronting a recession and inflation simultaneously didn't know whether to step on the brakes or the accelerator. (Note the machine-age metaphor, always misleading and now almost comically out of date.) At the same time, intellectual developments such as monetarism, rational-expectations theory, and supply-side economics challenged the Keynesian consensus. So the parties developed new economic policies, with Republicans promoting tax cuts and tight money and Democrats promoting an "industrial policy" whereby the government would use subsidies to protect America's manufacturing base. By the early 1990s, industrial policy had morphed into "public investment": The government would increase the economy's productive powers by spending more on education, child care, mass transit, and the like.

The turning point for both parties came in 1993, when the public-investment crowd lost out to the deficit reducers within the Clinton administration. Bill Clinton decided to attack the deficit by raising taxes. But while a Keynesian might have done this to cool off an overheating economy, Clinton argued that reducing the deficit would actually stimulate a recovering economy by bringing interest rates down. That Clinton's tax increases had this effect is still the official wisdom in Washington.

In our new post-deficit era, both parties have agreed to continue on autopilot, which means using surpluses to pay down the national debt. But this is more a budget policy than an economic one. It was adopted without any intellectual groundwork. The supply-siders were mocked for having sketched their theory on cocktail napkins, but the napkins of the debt reductionists are blank. Clinton merely stumbled into the policy for political reasons. The economic glosses on debt repayment contradict each other: It's supposed to stimulate the economy, presumably through lower interest rates, but it's also supposed to cool it down. Hence the complaints that Republican tax cuts would dangerously overheat the economy.

If Republicans don't have good answers to this critique, it's because they too have lost sight of economics. Their mistake was to overstate the case against Clinton's tax increases in 1993. Instead of predicting that his bill would reduce growth, cause some women and older men in upper-income households to stop working, and depress savings rates—all of which indeed resulted—they said that it would plunge the economy into a recession. When this didn't happen, and the economy after a few years of subpar growth started chugging along, Republicans were embarrassed (as much as politicians get, anyway) and, more important, left with nothing to say.

■

Each party has policies that it defends on economic grounds. But, unlike before, neither party has a policy on the economy as a whole.

■

Next, Republicans embraced the cause of deficit reduction as their own after they took over Congress in 1995. They did this less because it made any economic sense than because it held their factions together: Perot-style populists and good-government types thought balancing the books was important in its own right, while conservatives thought they could cut government in the name of cutting deficits. All of a sudden, Republicans were echoing Clinton's claims about deficits and interest rates and forgetting what they had said from the early 1980s until just two years before (that deficits have a negligible effect on interest rates). Once again, economics was subordinated to budget policy.

At the same time, the conservative intelligentsia was losing interest in economics. Here the crucial development was the loss of faith in Jack Kemp. Conservatives grew disenchanted with him for many reasons, but one of the most important was the sense that he placed too much emphasis on economics. He believed, so the indictment ran, in *Homo economicus*, the rational economic calculator found only in academic

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models, and ignored the role of culture. Conservatives began to reject as hopelessly inadequate Kemp's notion that enterprise zones and deregulation could rescue the inner cities.

They argued (rightly) that the nation's most pressing problems were not economic but moral, cultural, and spiritual—a point that has become all the stronger the more prosperous Americans have felt. As George W. Bush put it in a speech to lunchgoers at the Manhattan Institute in October, "Too often, my party has focused on the national economy, to the exclusion of all else—speaking a sterile language of rates and numbers, of CBO this and GNP that. Of course we want growth and vigor in our economy. But there are human problems that persist in the shadow of affluence." Bush's remarks represented (as they often do) the solidification of a Republican consensus.

The supply-siders' counterattack—beginning, again, roughly five years ago—was doomed by its own rigidity. They attacked social-conservative initiatives, such as the $500 child tax credit and marriage-penalty relief, as distractions from the campaign for a reduction in marginal tax rates. The implicit assumption was that the purpose of a tax code is to raise revenue for the government while doing the least harm to the economy. Any departure from this ideal they criticized as "social engineering." But why shouldn't policymakers also try to mitigate the harm done by taxes to families? The tax burden on families has increased for decades, as inflation ate away the personal exemption; the child tax credit only began to undo the damage. And the supply-siders' main criticism of marriage-penalty relief was that it cost too much in revenues that should have gone to other tax cuts—the sort of zero-sum, it's-the-government's-money thinking that they usually oppose.

Not content merely to attack their allies, supply-siders walked into a cul-de-sac of their own. Tax reform replaced tax cuts as their rallying cry. Here was an economist's dream: the chance to devise a new tax code from scratch on the basis of principle, with no concessions to interest groups, liberal tinkerers, or even public sentiment. But a dream is not a policy, and politicians were happy to give lip service to tax reform while punching new holes in the tax code for their friends. Republicans thus oscillated wildly between grand abstractions and low deals, with voters in the dark about what they stood for.

And this is, more or less, the situation today. Nobody in Congress any longer plays the role in developing a Republican economic policy that Bob Kasten, Jack Kemp, or Vin Weber once did. Dick Armey and Phil Gramm are academic economists, but the former has his hands full running the House, and the latter concentrates more on tactics than on vision. Bill Archer crafted a pro-growth tax bill, but he's retiring from the House. Perhaps freshman congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin will emerge as a supply-side leader for the next generation. Meanwhile, supply-siders such as (NATIONAL REVIEW's) Lawrence Kudlow are hoping that if Republicans take the White House, the next administration will build on the foundation laid by Archer (perhaps naming Archer Treasury secretary?).

It's not yet clear what Bush's economic policy is going to be. His top economic adviser, Larry Lindsey, might best be described as a fine-tuning supply-sider. Where pure supply-siders favor cutting tax rates permanently, to improve incentives and thus raise the long-term rate of economic growth, Lindsey would cut rates temporarily, to give a jolt to a weakening economy. (Lindsey has been an economic pessimist for the last four years.) Unlike most supply-siders, Lindsey balks at tax cuts that appear to favor capital. This may be a political judgment based on an outdated view of workers, many of whom are now accumulating capital themselves. Or it may be a point of principle: Lindsey has recently been quoted as objecting to Steve Forbes's flat tax because it doesn't tax capital. (This is, strictly speaking, not true: Forbes would tax capital, but not multiple times, as the current tax code does.)

Missouri Republican Jim Talent argues that the lack of focus on economic policy reflects a healthy perspective on the power of politicians: "There's been a general reevaluation of the relative importance of monetary and fiscal policy. Haven't the monetarists won?" It's not nearly as important to cut marginal tax rates as it was 20 years ago, when they were punitive. We may now, however, be ascribing too much importance to the Federal Reserve. On the stump in Iowa, Forbes has been blaming low farm prices on Alan Greenspan's tight-money policies. Actually, farm prices have been falling for centuries; this is not only the *result* of civilizational advance, but a prime component of it. Conducting monetary policy by reference to

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the price of corn is a peculiar idea—especially coming from Forbes, one of the few currently prominent Republicans who still has a well-thought-out economic worldview.

Before he dropped out of the presidential race, Dan Quayle, too, took up the anti-Greenspan line. There is a legitimate case against Greenspan, particularly against his suggestions that the economy and stock market might be doing *too* well. But the criticism of Greenspan raises a political dilemma for conservatives: Until now, they have been saying that Greenspan, rather than Clinton, was responsible for the strong economy. If they turn on Greenspan, they will have to find a new line—or change the subject. Gov. Bush promises "prosperity with a purpose," seemingly conceding that Gore does in fact know how to deliver prosperity, but suggesting that this is no great accomplishment.

Political risks aside, the lack of an economic policy may not be such a bad thing. It made sense for conservative intellectuals to shift their gaze from economics to the culture of poverty, national character, and other topics. In the current economic environment, it makes sense to focus on tax cuts that promote social rather than economic goals—such as cuts that make it easier to save for college or health care. Maybe a revival of economic policy can await the next recession.

But ideas don't come out of the blue when serious trouble strikes; generally, they have been germinating for some time. The danger posed by the intellectual disarray regarding economics is that the next time we're in a crunch, our political elites will have no idea what to think or do. Our prosperity might be more dependent on dumb luck than is comfortable to think. **NR**

The Next Rights Revolution?

It's Bowser's time at last.

RICHARD A. EPSTEIN

"FUR is murder!" is a slogan you didn't hear very much until recently. In part, it is because the world used to face other forms of outrage, in which human beings lost their lives because of their religious beliefs or, closer to home, were kept out of public places because of their skin color. Against this grim background, the advocates of civil rights and civil liberties had a proper mission: to ensure that all human beings enjoy the full and equal protection of the laws.

Now come the animal-rights advocates, who ask the following provocative question: Has the civil-rights revolution gone far enough by attacking invidious distinctions based on race, color, or religious beliefs? Or should it be regarded as backward and incomplete because it fails to recognize legal rights in (nonhuman) animals? Is discrimination against animals, as many animal-rights advocates repeatedly insist, like discrimination against blacks? That the law was so wrong, for so long, on the scope of its protection in the prior case raises challenges that we cannot ignore in the second. In what way, exactly, is the law justified in preferring the status of human beings to that of lower animals?

Both sides must be heard on this critical debate. It is unfortunate, therefore, that many of the law courses that address this issue are courses in animal "rights," taught by advocates on one side of the issue, as opposed to animal "law," which offers a more fruitful and historically grounded approach.

The treatment of animals did not suddenly pop onto the social agenda. Rather, it has been with us from the beginning of human society. In ancient times, animals were already crucial to the survival of society. Domesticated animals were the source of food, clothing, agricultural muscle-power, and even (through cavalry) military and strategic strength. Animals were treated as an animate type of property. People acquired ownership of wild animals by capturing them; once acquired, these animals ceased to be free and became the property of owners, to use, breed, consume, or sell. The Romans, for example, reserved their most solemn form of conveyance for certain key draft animals, which they recognized as critical capital assets. Only land rivaled them in value.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, one weakness of this system of animal law became apparent. Its property-based rules provided no mechanism to prevent the systematic extinction of wild animals through over-hunting and over-fishing. To counter this risk, legal systems instituted, with varying degrees of success, statutes that limited the catch of whales, fish, and wild game in order to counteract the "tragedy of the commons" that results when a hunter keeps his entire quarry, but suffers only a tiny fraction of the losses caused by the eventual extinction of the herd. More recently, stringent protections afforded to endangered species have generated controversy, as farmers have claimed—rightly in my view—that they have been unfairly forced to stand aside while protected animals decimate their sheep and cattle, for which they receive not a dime in compensation from the government.

Behind these traditional debates lies one key assumption: *The animal itself cannot be recognized as a holder of property rights valid against human beings.* Today's vocal defenders of animal rights brand this assumption "species-ist." Sometimes the classical view made animals property; at other times, they were the object of public regulation. In both cases, the legal rules were imposed largely for the benefit of human beings, either as owners of animals or as part of the public at large that benefited from their preservation.

Today's animal-rights activists want to overturn this "species-ist" consensus; they call for a declaration of independence of animals from their owners. While this clarion call generates tremendous emotional resonance, it is intellectually dangerous. Last August, I asked in the *New York Times*:

Mr. Epstein is a professor of law at the University of Chicago. His most recent book is *Principles for a Free Society: Reconciling Individual Liberty with the Common Good.*

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"Would even bacteria have rights? There would be nothing left of human society if we treated animals not as property but as independent holders of rights."

The animal-rights activists were unhappy with that comment, but they are philosophically misguided on several grounds. First, they claim that our understanding of the complex behavior of animals has been revolutionized in such a way that the status of animals must be changed. But although the field of animal behavior has made enormous strides in recent years, the basic understanding has not changed. The law has understood for a long time that animals have extensive powers of anticipation and rationalization; they can form, and break, alliances; they can show anger, annoyance, and remorse; they can store food for later use; they respond to courtship and aggression; they can engage in acts of rape and acts of love; they respect, and violate, territories. In many ways, their repertory of emotions is quite broad, rivaling that of human beings. But the fact remains that they do not have the higher capacity for language and thought that characterizes human beings as a species.

We should never pretend that the case against recognizing animal rights is easier than it really is; by the same token, we cannot accept the facile argument that our new understanding of animals must lead to a new appreciation of their rights. The fundamentals of animal behavior were well known to the men who fashioned the old legal order.

Second, animal-rights activists claim that because people today do not need to rely on animal labor in order to survive, greater animal rights must be recognized. They tend to phrase this claim in a universalistic way, as if it were true uniformly of all societies, when, in fact, less fortunate societies would suffer greatly from the loss of animal-based food and clothing. There would be serious harm even in the prosperous lands that could survive without using animals for consumption or labor, because the demands of the activists cut far deeper. For them, the mere ownership of animals is a sin: no pets, no circuses, no milk, no cheese, no horses to ride, no dogs, cats, birds, or fish around the house. These relationships are based on an inequality of power and are thus condemned; the animals who seem to like being cared for suffer from, as it were, a form of false consciousness!

An even more ominous consequence would forbid the use of animals for medical science. The argument here is moral, for no one would dispute the proposition that animals should be not be used in research if the same results could be achieved at the same cost by test tubes or computer simulations alone. Nor would many people want future surgeons to try out new techniques on animals if they could be performed, without risk, on human beings. Sadly, however, these animal tests are necessary. We have a dreadful shortage today of human organs for transplantation, and unless we are prepared to do studies on pigs and perhaps chimpanzees, we shall never develop an understanding of how to overcome the problem of organ rejection. And unless we are prepared to harvest animal organs, than all research done in this area will prove idle.

■

The defenders of animal rights shrink, at least publicly, from the stark implications of their position.

■

I think any delay in this testing would be undesirable. If that be species-ism, I plead guilty—because, while I do care abut the welfare of animals, I consider the welfare of humans a higher concern.

If parity between animal rights and human rights is ever acknowledged, more than medical research will suffer. Our entire system of property allows owners to transform the soil and to exclude others. Now, if the first human being on the scene may exclude subsequent arrivals, what happens when animals are given similar rights? Their dens, burrows, nests, and hives long antedate human arrival. The principle of first possession might therefore block us from clearing the land for farms, homes, and factories—unless we can find a way to make just compensation to each animal for its losses. But I fail to see how this system would work, for to transfer animals from one habitat to another only impermissibly displaces animals at the second location.

Roman Genn

The blunt truth is that the arrival of human beings necessarily results in the death of some earlier animal occupants, even if it increases the welfare of others. So if prior in time is higher in right, then we should fold up our tents right now and let the animals fight it out for territory, just as if we had never arrived on the face of the globe.

The defenders of animal rights shrink, at least publicly, from the stark implications of their position, and choose to dwell instead on their victories in court. But the legal arguments the activists make in these court cases are credible precisely because they have nothing whatsoever to do with their broader claims. Animal owners have recovered large awards for the malpractice of veterinarians. The damages paid are meant to

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cover not only the market value of the animal, but the loss of companionship to the owner. This is good law and solid economics, because it recognizes that when these non-monetary elements are included, the *actual* losses to the owner exceed the market value. It is commonplace today to allow one spouse to sue for the damages that resulting from the loss of companionship when the other spouse is injured or dies. But, whether for human beings or pets, the interests vindicated are those of the party who suffers the emotional loss and the loss of companionship, not the interests of the person or animal who has died or been injured. These cases derive their power from a property-rights conception. It is hard, then, to see how they augur a new judicial age in which animals will have rights of their own against owners. It is not as though offspring of the deceased animal have an action for wrongful death.

A similar logic applies to a recent federal-court decision in Washington, D.C., in which a zoo visitor was held to have "standing" to sue under a federal law requiring that zookeepers confine primates in such a way that the animals' "psychological well-being" is assured. That objective is certainly laudable in simple human terms. But the recognition of the zoo visitor's standing to sue makes it crystal clear that the rights vindicated by the action were those of the individual plaintiff, and not those of the animal.

■

It's one thing to raise social consciousness about the plight of animals, and another to raise their status to an asserted parity with human beings.

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No one can deny the enormous political waves created by animal rights activists. It is also easy to understand how their anti-property theme gains adherents among those who, for other reasons, don't like private property. But even though it's understandable, we have to recognize that the results of a victory by animal-rights extremists would be pernicious. Rules that prevent gratuitous cruelty to animals should be supported, because animals suffer. But it is one thing to raise social consciousness about the plight of animals and another to raise their status to an asserted parity with human beings. That move, if systematically implemented, would pose a mortal threat to society that few human beings will, or should, accept.

We have quite enough difficulty in persuading or coercing human beings to respect the rights of their fellows, so that all can live in peace. By treating animals as our moral equals, we would undermine the liberty and dignity of human beings—making the slaughters of Hitler, Stalin, or Pol Pot seem no worse than the daily activity of preparing cattle for market. That is one kind of moral equivalence we must never allow. Animals are properly property. To misunderstand the rights of animals is to cheapen the rights of human beings. **NR**

Ain't Gettin' Any Older

The bizarre triumph of youth

JAMES BOWMAN

THAT America invented both the teenager and youth culture is not new information, but it is conveniently documented by Thomas Hine in his new book, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager*. Hine shows that the American teen was a product of the Depression, when, for the first time, partly as a result of laws reserving jobs for heads of families, high school became an all-but-universal experience. But if the first teenagers were to some extent the product of national poverty, those of today are the product of national wealth, which in the latter part of the century has become so great that young adults expect to prolong the teen experience into their thirties and beyond.

In fact, as Robert Samuelson has pointed out, "our culture is quietly erasing the idea of age. All ages are blurring with all other ages. Children shall become grown up as soon as possible. Young adults shall remain children as long as possible." *Newsweek* asks about the "Tweens"—kids between 8 and 14—"Are they growing up too fast?" Of course. But where "growing up fast" once meant going to work and assuming adult responsibilities in the teenage years, now it means acquiring a facile sophistication about the adult world—especially sexual matters—while holding on to a child's economic dependency and emotional immaturity for longer than ever.

One result is that what used to be known, often pejoratively, as "the youth culture" has become the culture of an increasingly larger segment of the population. In fact, it is in the process of becoming culture *tout court*. This is particularly noticeable to anyone who sees, as I do, a lot of first-run movies, all but a few of which seem to be made to suit the tastes and sensibilities of 13-year-olds. This is only to be expected. The demographic profile of those who pay full price to see first-run movies (often more than once) is skewed towards those who are old enough to want to meet friends, including those of the opposite sex, at places away from home, but who are not old enough (or rich enough) to go to restaurants, bars, and clubs. Grownups tend to think it's not worth the trouble just to go out to a movie. They prefer to wait until it comes out on video.

You might think that soon they would be finding, if they

Mr. Bowman is American editor of the (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, and film critic of *The American Spectator*.

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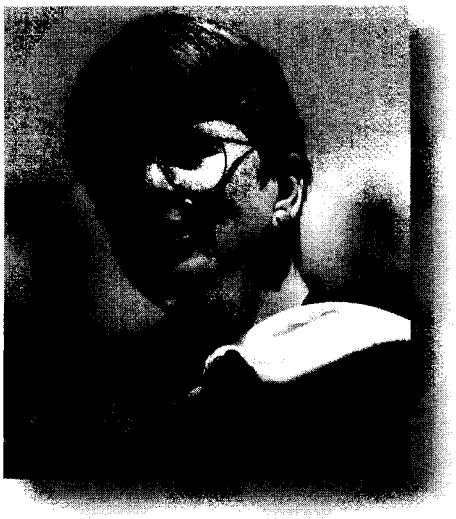

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haven't already, that there isn't even anything to rent. Their taking themselves out of the market for first-run films must produce a vicious marketing circle, guaranteeing that the entertainment industry will cater even more to kids, which will make their parents even less likely to want to go to the movies. Yet it also seems to be the case that adult tastes are undergoing a process of juvenescence. When the boy-man Adam Sandler has had two monster hits in the last year (*The Waterboy* and *Big Daddy*), both of them holding up for admiration the star's trademark case of arrested development, you know that something essential but not very complimentary is being said about our culture. And on television, we have shows like *Seinfeld* and *Friends*—now joined by *Oh Grow Up* and others—that celebrate the long twilight of adolescence, lingering like the midnight sun into middle age; we also have a plethora of frank celebrations of the teenage sensibility, such as *Dawson's Creek*; *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*; *Freaks and Geeks*; *Popular*; and *Manchester Prep*, to name only a few.

■

The conceit of high-school-as-the-world is naturally attractive to those who accept regression to adolesence as a form of personal liberation and spiritual fulfillment.

■

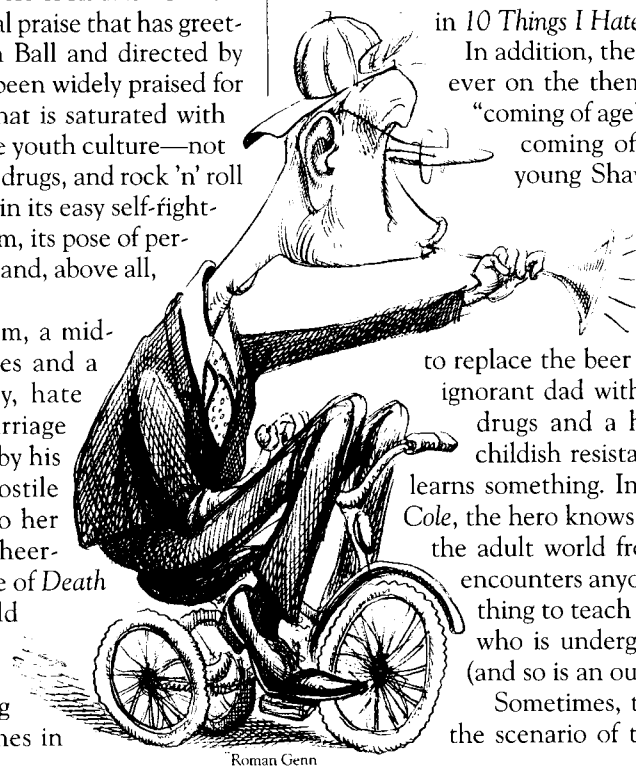
As a result, we have by now become so accustomed to the bias toward youth of popular entertainment that we have almost forgotten what grown-up movies look like. Or so I conclude from the outpouring of critical praise that has greeted *American Beauty*. Written by Alan Ball and directed by Sam Mendes, this is a movie that has been widely praised for its seriousness and intelligence, but that is saturated with the peculiar ethos and aesthetics of the youth culture—not only in its enthusiastic embrace of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll as a tonic for the over-forties, but also in its easy self-righteousness, its programmatic romanticism, its pose of perpetual disillusion and psychic scarring, and, above all, its huge appetite for self-pity.

Kevin Spacey plays Lester Burnham, a middle-aged man who has a job he hates and a wife and daughter who, apparently, hate him. He no longer enjoys a real marriage with his wife and is hardly spoken to by his daughter, who becomes even more hostile when she sees that he is attracted to her best friend and fellow high-school cheerleader. There is more than a hint here of *Death in Venice*, particularly as we are told from the beginning by no less an authority than Lester himself that he is going to die soon. The young blonde cheerleader, whom he imagines in a bath of crimson rose petals, becomes the image of life and liveliness that he is soon to leave behind—once, that is, he has quit his job, gone to work in a fast-food joint, bought a late-1960s-vintage muscle car, and taken up weightlifting, pop music, and pot-smoking again.

Like so many other baby boomers, he continues to cherish the illusion that real life is, or ought to be, the life of his adolescence, free of marital or material encumbrances. And, also like so many other baby boomers, he is frightened (or, to be more precise, the filmmakers are frightened) by military men, who seem to represent to them the world of "rules, structure, discipline" that they so desperately want to believe is merely optional, a relic of various political and sexual "repressions" in the past. The representative of "rules, structure, discipline" in *American Beauty* is a violently homophobic Marine colonel, who, of course, turns out to be repressing his own homosexual desires. "You can't just go around doing what you want to in life," says the Colonel to his son.

"What a sad old man you are," says the son to the Colonel.

In other words, the bedrock truth about life that all previous generations have assumed must be learned in order to obtain one's passport to responsible adulthood is, in *American Beauty*, denied by the adults themselves. High school is seen, not from the perspective of adulthood, but as children see it—that is, as the world itself. The conceit of high-school-as-the-world is naturally attractive to a generation inclined to accept Kevin Spacey's regression to adolescence as a form of personal liberation and spiritual fulfillment, and more ambitious filmmakers have taken a leaf out of the book of Amy Heckerling, whose *Clueless* (1995) transplanted Jane Austen's *Emma* into the Lilliputian setting of a posh Beverly Hills high school. This year we have seen similar adaptations of Laclos's *Liaisons dangereuses* in *Cruel Intentions* and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in *10 Things I Hate About You*.



Roman Genn

In addition, there have been more films than ever on the theme of what used to be called "coming of age"—only now it's more like *not* coming of age. In *Outside Providence*, young Shawn Hatosy escapes from the spiritual and intellectual poverty of working-class life in Pawtucket in the mid 1970s to a posh academy in Connecticut—only to replace the beer and poker of his boorish and ignorant dad with their preppy equivalents in drugs and a high-minded but essentially childish resistance to authority. At least he learns something. In *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole*, the hero knows everything that's wrong with the adult world from the beginning and never encounters anyone from that world who has a thing to teach him, save a former stepfather who is undergoing a sex-change operation (and so is an outcast like him).

Sometimes, these films deliberately adapt the scenario of the old-fashioned coming-of-

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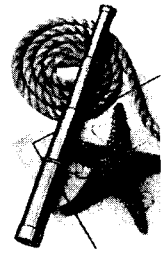

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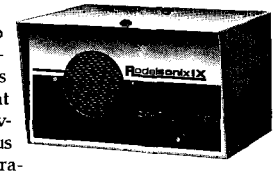

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age movie to its new purpose. In *Varsity Blues*, the classic story of young men goaded to athletic achievement by a tough but successful coach is repeated with this variation: The crusty exterior of the coach (played by Jon Voight) no longer conceals real affection for the boys, who are being held to high standards for their own sakes. Instead, he is merely corrupt, self-obsessed, and power-hungry, and uses the boys' efforts for self-aggrandizement. The moment of not growing up comes when the football team, led by the classic rebel and malcontent, refuses to play for him, forces him to leave the locker room at half time, and goes out to win the big game by doing things *their* way instead of the coach's.

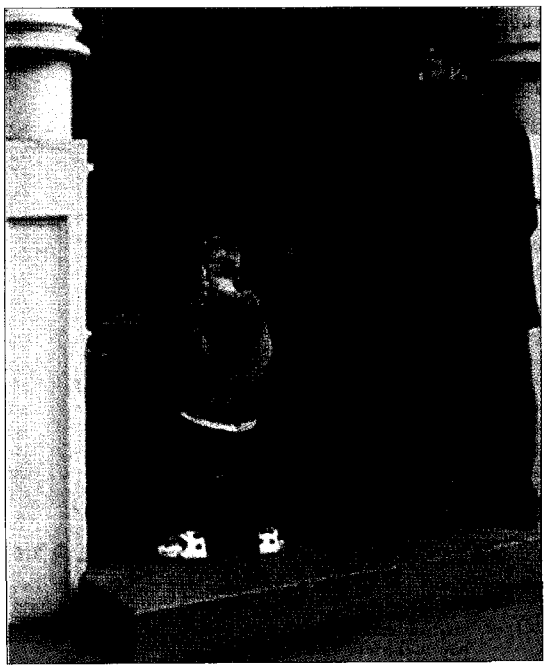
Likewise, in *Teaching Mrs. Tingle*, the classic figure of the tough teacher whom a talented pupil can never satisfy is introduced only in order to be demythologized. Mrs. Tingle does not insist on redoubled efforts from the pupil in order that she should learn to get the best out of herself, but for sadistic reasons: Mrs. Tingle herself has never managed to escape the hellhole of the small town where they live, and she is wildly jealous at her pupil's chance of a scholarship, which will presumably allow *her* to do so. The scene of not-growing-up in this case is even more spectacularly at odds with tradition: The pupil and two of her classmates kidnap and hold hostage the hapless Mrs. Tingle until they are able to discredit her and have her fired.

■

'You're both little children.' Or else, they're both what passes for adult these days. It comes to the same thing.

■

The best and most interesting of the Peter Pan genre are *Rushmore*, written and directed by Wes Anderson, and *Election*, by Alexander Payne. Both films use essentially the same device—namely, high school as a metaphor for life itself—in order to make an ambiguously satirical point. In *Rushmore*, 15-year-old Max can't imagine any life outside Rushmore Prep and has no higher ambition than to make Rushmore his whole world. His motto is: "Find what you like to do and do it for the rest of your life. For me it's going to Rushmore." Yet, paradoxically, where it seems to be the ambition of everyone in America born since the war to remain a child for as long as possible, Max can't wait to grow up. It's just that he has learned to regard adulthood as consisting of ever more elaborate denials of reality.



Columbia Tristar, 1999

Scene from Big Daddy

For if adults like Herman Blume, the millionaire father of two of Max's more moronic classmates and a man with whom he forms an improbable bond, can continue to pretend that they are children all the way through their forties, why should Max not pretend that he is grown up at 15? To do this he must deny his abysmal academic record and his humble origins and build a career as a schoolboy entrepreneur—with the help of Mr. Blume. And when he finds himself attracted to Miss Cross, a young widow who teaches first grade at the school, he simply ignores the age difference between them and tries to convince her that they have a "relationship."

Like Miss Cross, we don't quite know what to make of Max's easy but comic assumption of the prerogatives of adulthood. "Neither one of us has any idea where this relationship is going," he says to her in one of several surreal conversations, as she tries both to agree and to tell him as gently as possible that there is no relationship. When Mr. Blume becomes his rival in love, Max does not hesitate to declare war on him. Both the man-child and the child-man assume their essential equality, and even Miss Cross can hardly prevent herself from taking Max at his own valuation. "You know, you and Herman deserve each other," she tells Max in exasperation. "You're both little children." Or else, they're both what passes for adult these days. It comes to the same thing.

A similar approach is taken by *Election*, in which a high-school pupil named Tracy Flick, who is older than her years and whose ruthlessness is exceeded only by her smarminess, draws a rather sleepy teacher named Jim McAllister into the comically trivial but deceptively serious world of school politics. As a candidate for student-government president of George Washington Carver High School, Tracy couples Clinton-like assurances that "I care about Carver" with pathetic stories of alleged suffering, as in the case of one student said to be "alienated from his own homeroom."

McAllister, out of sheer dislike for Tracy's insufferable phoniness, encourages a dumb football hero to run against her and so calls down upon his own head her terrible, career-ending wrath. As in *Rushmore*, the world that we know is shrunk to high-school size as a way of satirizing it, but where *Rushmore* is gentle and rueful and good-humored about it, *Election* has an almost Swiftian edge to its disgust with Tracy's combination of pettiness and viciousness. But neither of these films could succeed as it does without the culture's tacit acknowledgment of *American Beauty*'s vital principle: The highest good of man—and of woman—is to remain a spiritual teenager for as long as possible. **NR**

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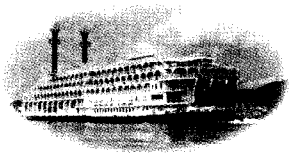

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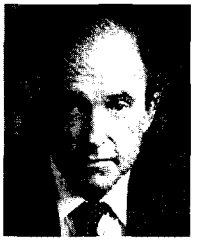
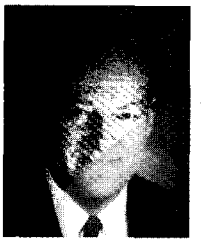
William F. Buckley Jr.

Robert Bork

José Piñera


Lawrence Kudlow

Stephen Moore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FROM THE DESK OF DONALD J. TRUMP

Dear Gwyneth:

You are a diamond. You are completely and totally 100 percent class, and I know class. You are so completely and totally classy, Gwyneth, that you deserve more than a "Paltrow" or an "Affleck" after your name. What you deserve is to be called what is recognized around the world as a trademark of distinction, graciousness, and exclusivity.

You should be called "Trump." As in, "Mrs. Trump." As in, "The First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Donald J. Trump."

As you know, I am considering very carefully the concept of a Trump Presidency™. In order to give the American people the grand class leadership they deserve, I plan to take a wife.

The deal points are as follows:

1. The marriage is to last the entire eight-year duration of the Trump Presidency™ (TP).

2. Standard prenuptial agreements in force: Cash payment at the end of the TP to total not more than $25 million.

3. 100 percent sexual fidelity for the duration of TP, provided services for same are rendered on an as-needed basis.

4. Weight and/or physical appearance to remain substantially similar to present conditions, i.e. weight to remain within a 2.5-pound range taking as a baseline unclothed weight upon rising in the morning; physical appearance (hair color, teeth color, wardrobe selection) to remain unchanged throughout TP. NB: Weight requirements apply to First Lady ONLY.

It's very much a win-win situation. The country gets a world class First Lady on the arm of its world-class President (myself), and you get me. We all win.

Please contact me directly, or my representatives, to get into this.

The Donald

Dear Gwyneth:

Don't treat me like a schmuck, okay? I have been totally and completely 100 percent upfront with you, I have put what I think is a superb offer on the table, and to date neither I nor any of my representatives have heard from you.

Was that my final offer? Of course it wasn't. But any deal must have two interested parties, and I cannot comprehend why an individual such as yourself would refuse to negotiate with an individual such as my organization.

To be totally frank and candid, some of the luster has gone out of the diamond. I am taking your silence in regard to my offer as a form of hardball. I am considering other properties. Overtures have been made to the First Lady of American Music, Miss Mariah Carey, and to the First Lady of American Television, Miss Neve Campbell.

What I am offering is very much a Princess Grace-type situation. Movie star becomes royalty, the whole bit. What you are offering is your deluxe physical appearance. Why are we not making this happen?

The offer expires at close of business Friday.

Donald

Dear Ivana:

When can we get together, as two old friends, and talk things over? I think about you all the time, Ivana. I think about the time we spent together, our beautiful children, and the totally 100 percent first class way you have of carrying yourself.

As I know you know, I am seriously considering the ramifications of a Trump Presidency™. The whole idea of a TP, if you'll cast your mind back, was yours, Ivana. At that time, you saw something in me—a power, a whole-leadership aura, and a greatness—that very few people excepting myself had ever known was present.

What I am offering is a re-partnership. It would be nothing short of world-shattering. It would be Bogie and Bacall. Taylor and Burton. Trump and Trump.

You were always special to me, Ivana, and I know that you know that. Please give this your 100 percent attention. Let me know by lunchtime Friday.

The D

Dear Gwyneth:

You know what? The deal is off the table. Best of luck in your future endeavors.

Donald J. Trump

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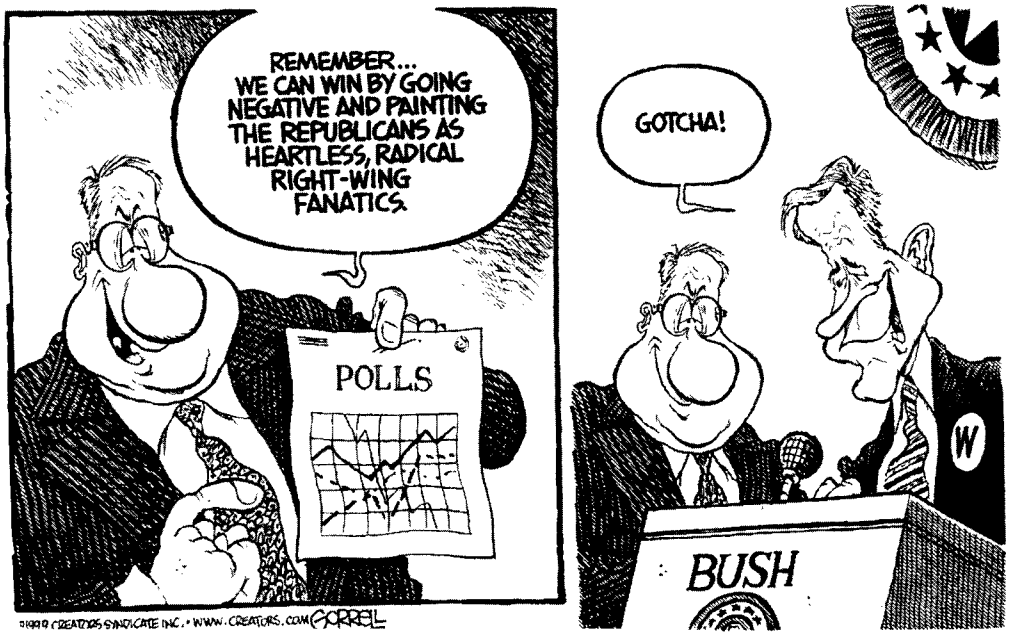

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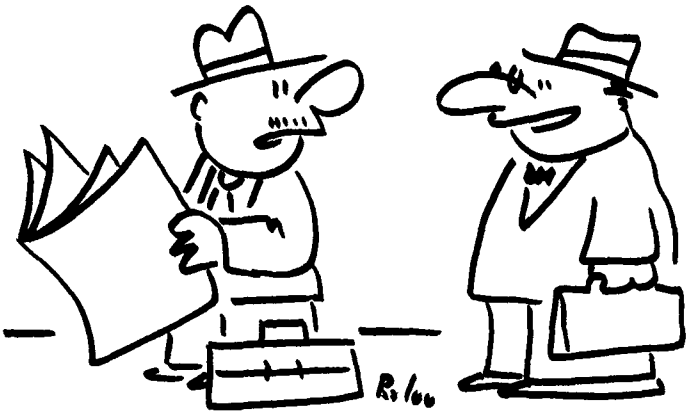
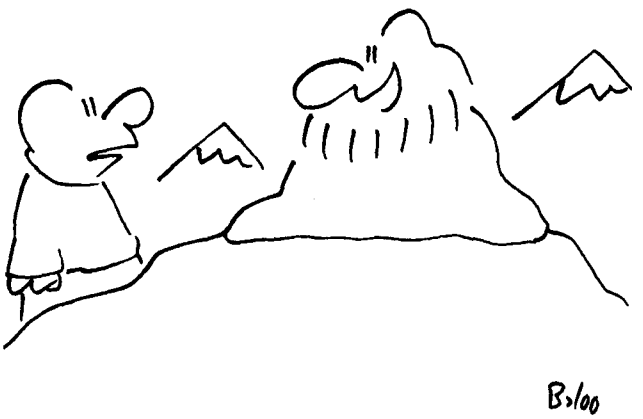


"Do nice guys really finish last?" "Usually they don't even make it to New Hampshire."



"Does power corrupt?" "Absolutely!"

"As president of an independent island republic, I'd like to apply for a loan from the World Bank."

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The Worst of Times

ROBERT HARRIS

Reflections on a Ravaged Century, by Robert Conquest (Norton, 336 pp., $26.95)

HISTORY is not what it was. Or, to put it another way, what we were encouraged in the schoolroom, or even the college lecture hall, to regard as an immutable series of facts turns out to be a shifting pattern of argument and interpretation, as substantial as smoke. Winston Churchill put it rather well in November 1940, in a clever and—under the circumstances—remarkably generous eulogy of his predecessor, Neville Chamberlain:

> It is not given to human beings, happily for them, for otherwise life would be intolerable, to foresee or to predict to any large extent the unfolding course of events. In one phase men seem to have been right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years later, when the perspective of time has lengthened, all stands in a different setting. There is a new proportion. There is another scale of values . . .

Ten or twenty years from now, looking back with fresh eyes on this bloody awful era—this "ravaged century," as Robert Conquest calls it in his new book—we might pick something else entirely as the defining moment of the years 1900 to 2000. But for now there seems no contest. The Bolshevik takeover of Russia in 1917 was the single great event—the rock dropped into the pool, if you like—from which almost everything else that has happened radiated. I suppose it is conceivable that Adolf Hitler would still have come to power in Germany, or that there would have been a second great world war—a conflict of ideologies—that killed 50 million, or that there would have been a Marxist revolution in China, or a nuclear arms race—but it is surely unlikely. Lenin's seizure of power changed everything, and it is entirely appropriate that Conquest's reflections on the century should concentrate mainly on the phenomenon of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Harris, a journalist and novelist, is author of *Fatherland*, *Enigma*, and, most recently, *Archangel*.

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Lenin, as depicted in the Eisenstein film October *(1927)*

The USSR existed for nearly three-quarters of the last 100 years, and the image it presented was always in transition, first revolutionary, then innovative, threatening, immutable, sclerotic, obsolescent, pitiful—and now, finally, insane. This is the underlying theme of Conquest's book: that Soviet history is finally a record of madness. He treats it, and with some reason, as a case study in collective delusion: a monument to a certain type of intellectual's capacity for seizing upon an Idea and pursuing it with a fanaticism that takes it beyond logic into the realm of the absurd.

It is, unexpectedly, a rather funny book, for how else, except with a certain grim humor, can one begin to describe how the ideas of an eccentric, desk-bound, 19th-century bourgeois came to dominate a large swath of humanity? That Karl Marx, like many other earthly deities, was something of a crackpot, with a belief in such Victorian pseudo-sciences as phrenology, was apparent even to his disciples. (On first meeting the Master, Wilhelm Liebknecht found himself having his skull deftly checked by Marx's fingers.) He left behind a system of ideas and predictions that have proved spectacularly wrong in almost every particular, and were starting to look creaky even by 1900—so much so that Lenin had to invent the concept of a "socialist vanguard" to impose a revolution on a proletariat not noticeably eager for one. As Conquest puts it: "Lenin saw that history was not behaving in accordance with Marxist theory, so he decided to force it to do so by subjective effort, like some phrenologist finding one of his subjects lacking the right bumps and producing them by clouting him on the head."

The first 20 years of Soviet Communism represented, by a very considerable margin, the most repressive and bloody regime the world had ever witnessed, a despotism statistically many hundreds of times more murderous than the one it had replaced. Between 1860 and 1914, the Tsarist authorities were responsible for, at most, 20,000 dead. In 1937 and 1938 alone, Stalin killed 2 million, often in circumstances of baroque and almost hallucinatory terror (Stalin's "senior poisoner," a Colonel Maironovski, personally accounted for 150 victims), while in the camps of the Gulag, in the words of *Izvestia* at the end of the Communist era, millions suffered "unbearable toil, cold and starvation, unheard-of degradation and humilia-

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tion, a life that could not have been endured by any other mammal." And for what? It now appears that the Soviet economy grew, in the 1930s, by just 3.5 percent a year—a meager omelet indeed for the breaking of so many eggs.

All of this is horribly familiar, not least from Conquest's own pioneering research over the past 30 years. What is, perhaps, more pertinent to the modern reader—especially the modern *clever* reader—is to contemplate the extent to which a kind of mass psychosis overtook intelligent Western observers. How could H. G. Wells have written, on

■

Human beings are fundamentally not rational, and are likely at any moment to be seized by a collective impulse towards some grand Idea.

■

meeting Stalin in 1934, in the wake of the extermination of the kulaks and the famine in Ukraine, that "I have never met a man more candid, fair and honest . . . I had thought before I saw him that he might be where he was because men were afraid of him, but I realize he owes his position to the fact that no one is afraid of him and everybody trusts him"? How was it possible for the socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb—in 1937, at the height of the Terror—to publish a 1,200-page description of a phantom civil society ("a new civilization"), which in reality existed only on paper? Why was Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* awarded a Pulitzer prize for his "dispassionate, interpretive reporting of the news from Russia," when he privately estimated that 7 million had died in the famine of 1933, but publicly insisted in his newspaper that "any report of famine" was "exaggeration or malignant propaganda"?

The glib and obvious answer is that they were taken in by Stalin, just as Chamberlain was deceived by Hitler. But this is unfair to Chamberlain, who, for all his faults, never lauded Nazism as "a new civilization" or claimed that Hitler was where he was because no one was afraid of him. It seems that Stalin's apologists, as Orwell and Koestler noted early on, deliberately suppressed their critical faculties in pursuit of the dream of the perfect Idea.

It goes on still. Conquest includes a devastating transcript of a 1994 interview given by his fellow octogenarian British historian, the Marxist Eric Hobsbawm. Asked whether it would have made any difference to his Communist commitment if he had known in 1934 that millions were dying in "the Soviet experiment," Hobsbawm replied (with, I suppose, commendable honesty), "Probably not." The interview continued:

> Interviewer: "What that comes down to is saying that had the radiant tomorrow actually been created, the loss of 15, 20 million people might have been justified?"
>
> Hobsbawm: "Yes."

One can imagine the ensuing outcry if any historian had said that Hitler's victims were a price worth paying for the "radiant tomorrow" of destroying Bolshevism. A few years after unburdening himself of this opinion, Hobsbawm was made a Companion of Honour to the Queen by the incoming Labour government. As Conquest rightly puts it: "The delusive view of the Soviet phenomenon to be found in Western intellectual, or near-intellectual, circles in the 1930s . . . will be incredible to later students of mental aberration." It is fairly incredible now.

Casting around for anything remotely comparable in modern history, one might with justice go back to the early 17th century, when a belief in witches suddenly gripped the minds of educated men in Europe. Tens of thousands of innocents, some as young as 4, were accused of sexual communion with the Devil, and consumed by fires set up in the market squares of some of the most civilized cities on earth. This irrational terror, as Hugh Trevor-Roper pointed out more than 30 years ago, "grew and grew terribly" only *after* the Renaissance, and was forwarded by the cleverest men of the day—"by the great Protestant reformers, by the saints of the Counter-Reformation, by the scholars, lawyers, and churchmen of the age of Scaliger and Lipsius, Bacon and Grotius, Bérulle and Pascal." Trevor-Roper could find no logic to explain this reversion to barbarism and declared it simply "a perplexing phenomenon: a standing warning to those who would simplify the stages of human progress."

This capacity of the human mind—in particular, the intelligent human mind—to seize on a doctrine that, with hindsight, appears almost crazy, to believe in it despite all empirical evidence to the contrary, and to assert it even at the cost of appalling suffering — indeed, almost to revel in that suffering, as if it were itself an index of the doctrine's worth—is what Conquest seeks to understand. And, of course, it cannot, finally, ever be fully understood. For while one can easily list—in a proper, "objective," Marxist manner—all the various economic and historical forces that led to the rise of Lenin and Stalin and Hitler, one will nonetheless miss the point entirely if one fails to recognize that human beings are fundamentally not rational, and are likely at any moment to be seized by a collective impulse towards some grand Idea, be it Marxism, fascism, or hysteria about witches. Conquest, in the end, comes very close to issuing a plea for a kind of decent apathy and tolerant indifference towards politics: "All the major troubles the world has had in our era have been caused by people who have let politics become a mania."

This is a fairly comfortless conclusion, but it seems to me correct. History, as Churchill observed, is essentially a question of perspective, and what seems right-thinking today may look like the grossest barbarity 50 years from now. I can't help feeling that all those Western businessmen who recently flew to Peking to toast the fiftieth anniversary of the Communist regime (which killed more victims than Stalin and Hitler combined) would have been wise to pack a copy of Conquest in their luggage. **NR**

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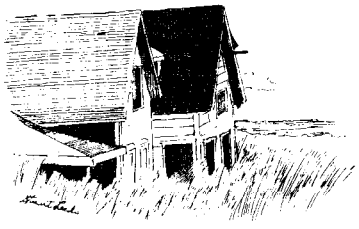
Reliable Source

ROBERT D. NOVAK

Fat Man in a Middle Seat: Forty Years of Covering Politics, by Jack W. Germond (Random House, 288 pp., $25)

I FIRST met Jack Germond in 1959. We were covering newly elected New York governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, who was barnstorming the country to test the presidential waters for 1960. Germond was a 31-year-old reporter for the Gannett newspapers, I a 28-year-old reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. The whisky-drinking, cigarette-smoking, poker-playing Germond of 1959 loved the great game of politics, but made fun of politicians, worried not about his girth or cholesterol level, and belonged to the slightly cynical "aw, nuts!" rather than the ever-bedazzled "gee whiz!" school of journalism. The Germond of 1999 is pretty much unchanged.

Reading *Fat Man in a Middle Seat* is like sitting in a bar with Germond long after midnight, downing shots of brandy too numerous to remember after a dinner too heavy to digest, and hearing irreverent stories of a life spent chronicling the pretentious men who aspire to lead us. "I didn't become a reporter because I felt a commitment to public service," he tells us in revealing why he turned down a dream job with Rockefeller in 1959. "I had no illusions about changing the world and no particular interest in doing so. I didn't go around wringing my hands about the people's right to know. I was a reporter because it was fun."



Germond became familiar to America starting in 1981 on *The McLaughlin Group* as a man of the Left, and in this memoir he often comes off as a knee-jerk, even bleeding-heart liberal. Yet he is also the country's best practitioner of "horse-race journalism," the kind that specializes in handicapping the prospects of politicians as they chase one another around the electoral track. That endeavor has for four decades consigned Germond to the road, where for every good story, he says, "you spend two or three rainy Friday nights at the airport in Atlanta trying to fly standby and ending up as the fat man in the middle seat."

Such exertions often put Germond (and his partner, Jules Witcover) well ahead of the pack, as when he forecast the rise of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton in favorable columns that he now flinches at recalling—particularly a 1978 "outrageous puff piece" (his own words) about the 31-year-old attorney general of Arkansas. Clinton "had faked me out of my shoes," Germond admits. "He had learned he could con the national press just like the locals." As for his discovery of Carter, "I have never been more mistaken than I was about [his] potential as president."

Such candor is vintage Germond. Calling himself "a garden-variety liberal inclined toward the Democrats," he confesses that his political beliefs occasionally interfered with accurate handicapping—especially when race was involved. In 1969, he mistakenly predicted the victory of Tom Bradley over Sam Yorty for mayor of Los Angeles because "I had allowed my political judgment to be skewed by my personal distaste for Yorty and hopes for a black man to succeed. It was the kind of mistake reporters must fight repeatedly, if they are to play in a fast league."

In the '80s, he reveals, "we didn't cover [Jesse] Jackson as critically as we did the other candidates." Why? For fear "of being called a racist." To my surprise, Germond also can be a pushover when a politician turns on the waterworks. He relishes a 1988 conversation with Michael Dukakis, "his face wet with tears," on the night that Dukakis's cousin, the actress Olympia Dukakis, won an Academy Award.

Usually, however, Germond can be relied on to pick out the phonies. Thus he calls Averell Harriman a penny-pinching fraud with an "inflated reputation" who "had little or no interest in doing the job of governor [of New York]." He calls Clinton the "most selfish and egocentric politician I have ever seen in decades of close association with so many leaders who are egocentric and selfish." George Bush (the elder) is indicted as a "totally amoral campaigner." Germond correctly concludes about George Wallace that even as he demagogued his way to national notoriety he "really didn't give a damn about race."

But ideological blinders may have kept Germond from appreciating the most successful politician and American

■

'I didn't go around wringing my hands about the people's right to know. I was a reporter because it was fun.'

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leader of the past 40 years: Ronald Reagan, who never could remember Germond's name until he began to appear frequently on television. (This was exactly my own experience with the Gipper.) "We had to wonder how the country made it through eight years with someone in the White House as vague and detached as Reagan always seemed to be," writes Germond, who ought to be embarrassed to say he would have preferred Howard Baker in the Oval Office.

The book's most delicious chapter recounts Germond's long but dysfunctional television marriage with John McLaughlin. Why did he not walk away from the megalomaniacal, overbearing moderator of *The McLaughlin Group* long before he did so in 1996, eight years after I myself left the program? Germond is typically candid: "The real reason was selfish. Appearing on television permitted me to enjoy the luxury of being a newspaper reporter without having to live on a newspaper reporter's salary. I could get an editor's pay without doing the work."

Memoirs often herald retirement, and Germond sounds as though he may make the 2000 campaign his last. The

Mr. Novak is a syndicated columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and a commentator for CNN. His new book, *Completing the Revolution*, will be published in January.

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"joy has been tempered," he says, by having to cover candidates who are programmed by fundraisers, poll-takers, and media consultants. He is not enraptured by today's journalists, either. Germond and I are of a dying breed of reporter who after the day's activities on the campaign trail "regularly drank too much" instead of going to our rooms to type up notes. During infrequent visits to campaign planes of the late '90s, he reports, "I have seen much less poker and drinking, and the womanizing, if any, has been reasonably well concealed." Cell phones, white wine instead of whisky, and early-morning jogging characterize contemporary reporters, and "a lot of them eat salads from room service, believe it or not." Worse yet, from Germond's outlook, this new breed of reporter views covering politics as a stepping stone to "managing editor or something equally Rotarian." I hope those earnest young men and women read this book to discover how a great reporter operated—and had fun doing it. **NR**

Whig Out

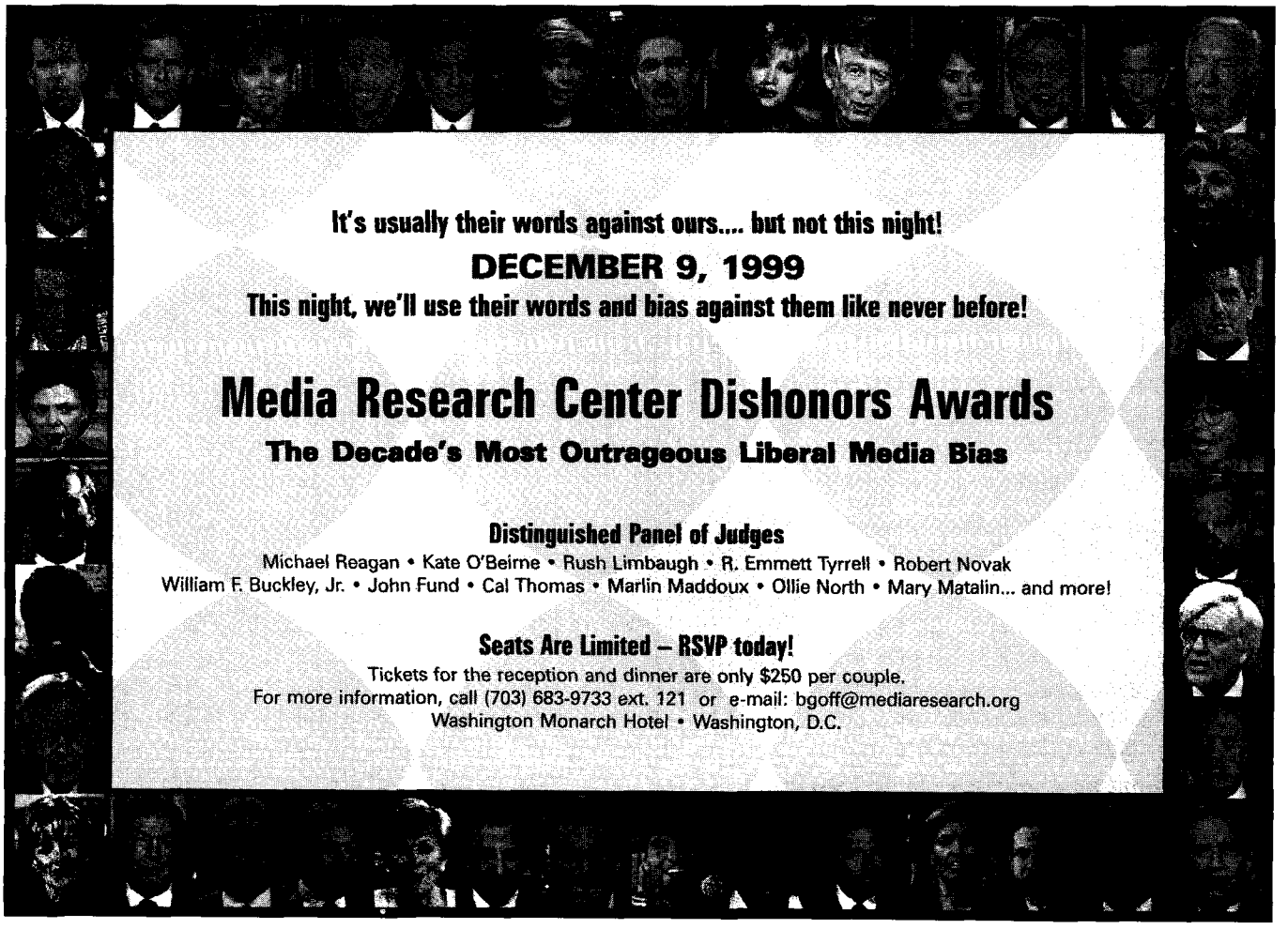
RICHARD A. SAMUELSON

American Compact: James Madison and the Problem of Founding, by Gary Rosen (Kansas, 237 pp., $29.95)

RECENTLY in these pages, John O'Sullivan highlighted the tradition of Tory conservatism ("Types of Right," Oct. 11). That tradition holds that "government is the art of managing the state" and regards the job of the politician as fundamentally reactive, "to deal with problems as they crop up." While O'Sullivan notes that the U.S. does not have much of a history of Toryism, he suggests that the GOP is now starting to think along Tory lines, and casts George W. Bush as a leader in the Tory mold. In *American Compact: James Madison and the Problem of Founding*, Gary Rosen reminds us why few American conservatives ever went down the Tory path. Rosen's book, which began as a Harvard dissertation, is lively, intelligent, and cogent.

Because it accepts the existence of the state as a given, Toryism, as O'Sullivan describes it, ignores certain key questions, such as, What makes a state legitimate? and, What is a state's purpose in the first place? Tories tend to see it as the job of a politician basically to deal with "problems," but this raises the question of what a "problem" is, and of how to evaluate the relative merits of proposed solutions. It is precisely because they never lost sight of questions like these that the Founders were Whigs, not Tories. They broke with Britain because of disagreements on questions of right and wrong, not on strict calculations of cost and benefit. After all, the taxes Parliament had tried to impose on the American colonists were not terribly

Mr. Samuelson is a doctoral candidate in the history department of the University of Virginia.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high. The colonists objected not to the amount of the tax, but to taxation without representation.

After 1776, the Americans had no state to accept as a given. So they were compelled to create a new one, or new ones, to serve their political ends. For that reason Madison became fixated on the "problem of founding": how to create a free nation. That problem had two dimensions, theoretical and practical. On the theoretical level, the question was that of what makes a state legitimate. The practical question was that of how to create a state that serves its appointed ends.

■

James Madison, writes Rosen, tried to create 'a kind of godless civil religion, with the Constitution as an altar.'

■

Like many other American political theorists at the time, Madison turned to "contract theory" to solve the problem of legitimacy. As the Declaration of Independence stated, governments derived "their just powers from the consent of the governed." That is, government is legitimate when the people create it to secure their rights. The problem was that while the people were the only legitimate source of political authority, they generally lacked the talent to create well-formed governments. In Madison's words, "Whatever respect may be due the rights of private judgment, and no man feels more of it than I do, there can be no doubt that there are subjects to which the capacities of the bulk of mankind are unequal."

Madison solved the problem of founding by going back to first principles and seeking to clarify the ends of politics. Since his own day, writers and politicians have cast Madison as a cold rationalist. Not true, Rosen argues. Such a portrait overlooks Madison's almost mystical devotion to the republican cause, a devotion that was "directed toward the achievement of a certain kind of human dignity, a rational refinement of the spirited insistence on self-government." In other words, Madison believed that self-government is good for the soul, and he looked to contract theory to serve that end.

His contribution in this field was innovative. Conventional contract theory portrayed the creation of governments as the fundamental act of self-government because "God's creatures imitate the divine by creating the constitution under which their legislators act." Madison instead argued that man finds his political "spiritedness" not in the "high politics" of founding, but rather in "everyday politics." He thought that elites have to take the lead in creating a working government, but then let the people take over.

To instill in the people a proper veneration for self-government and for themselves as self-governors, Rosen writes, Madison tried to create "a kind of godless civil religion, with the Constitution serving as an altar." Madison hoped that, inspired by such quasi-religious reverence for the American constitutional compact, the people would keep their government limited: within its appointed bounds, and serving its appointed ends. He hoped that the elite would be similarly inspired. After the compact was in force, their job became to guarantee the security of the compact. This was because the people would take on the burden of self-government only if elites forced them to do so. In this way, Madison provided a framework for judging what was, and was not, a state problem.

Although Madison's political enemies, and even some of his friends, accused him of flip-flopping when his narrow political needs required, Rosen argues that Madison was actually consistent because his method of judging means in terms of ends never varied. He never lost sight of the larger goal of securing self-government in the United States, and Rosen explains all of Madison's intellectual work in terms of that goal.

So what is one to make of this interpretation of Madison? As a representation of Madison's thought, it is largely convincing, though some of Rosen's

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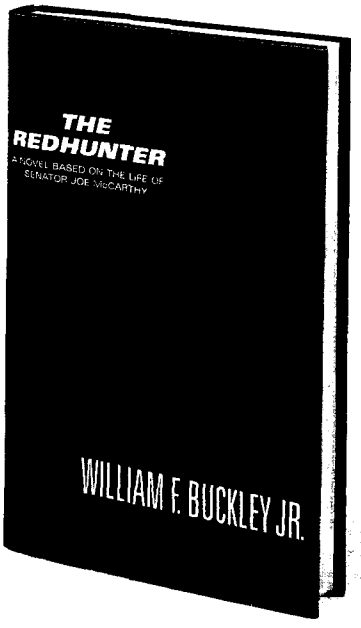

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attempts to defend Madison against the charge of instrumentalism have the feel of special pleading. Moreover, Rosen's suggestion that Madison thought himself right to "obfuscate" and to be less than "entirely candid" with others on certain matters, when he did so in service of the cause of self-government, does not reflect well on Madison's sense of political morality. These, however, are quibbles more with Madison than with Rosen, who has written an excellent book. **NR**

■ MANNERS ■

Trivial Pursuit

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

YOU can be sure you're not in New York City anymore when you receive Christian testimony from the cable guy. There are certain things everybody in the city of 7 million stories knows you just don't do, certain stories that don't get told, and this—the story of how your cable guy found Jesus Christ—is one of them. A recent transplant to Seattle, I had arranged to have my house wired; and the technician—young, friendly, with a grunge-type goatee beard—had noticed my yarmulke. He said, "Shalom! That's a Jewish word, right? We were talking about that in our Bible class." The cable guy then told me some about his own spiritual quest, his nondenominational church, how he didn't enter into a relationship with Christ till recently.

We chatted a little, at which point, apropos of I'm not sure what, he remarked that he had been watching the Discovery Channel the previous night. And he said, "I saw this really amazing interview where this guy was talking about abortion, really coming down hard on it. I was like, whoa! This guy's serious. I think he was some kind of

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy.*

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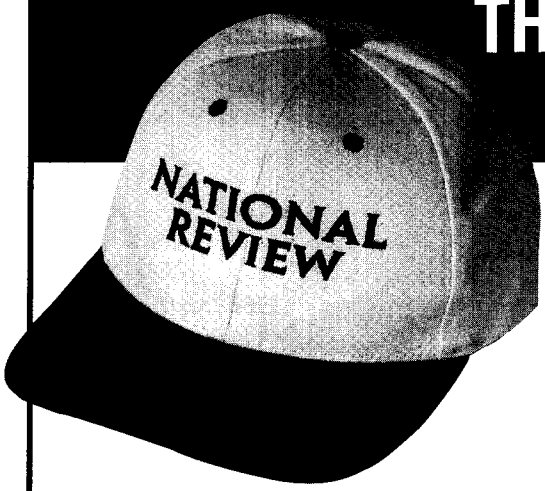

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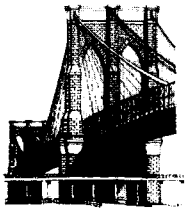
saint, maybe. St. Paul? Could that be right?"

St. Paul being interviewed about abortion on the Discovery Channel?

"Or maybe he was a pope. Some kind of pope, or saint. Is there a pope called Paul?"



Well, I said, the current Roman Catholic Pope is called John Paul.

"That's right! John Paul." When the cable guy not only gives you Christian testimony but is unfamiliar with the Pope, you really, really know you're not in New York.

One doesn't see a place clearly till he's not there anymore. I used to be a New Yorker. Now that I've left the Upper West Side for the Northwest Coast, the thing about my new city that strikes me again and again is how liberating it is not to have to know stuff. Call it the joy of ignorance. The stuff you have to know in New York includes not just facts about people, places, and things, but about the rigid code of conduct that governs life in the city. In New York, a cable guy who tells you about Jesus would be unthinkable. The fact that one doesn't talk about religion to strangers, probably even to friends, is as well known as the fact that John Paul II is the name of the Pope.

It's characteristic of New York that when Hillary Clinton declared her interest in running for senator, New Yorkers who doubted the appropriateness of her candidacy tended to express their doubt by observing that she didn't even know basic facts about the state. Crystallizing the skepticism even of many liberals, Pete Hamill contributed a "Back Page" piece to *The New Yorker*. It was a joke "New York Aptitude Test" to be given to all aspiring public-office holders, the queries including: "Who is Dr. Zizmor?"

■

The thing about my new city that strikes me again and again is how liberating it is not to have to know stuff.

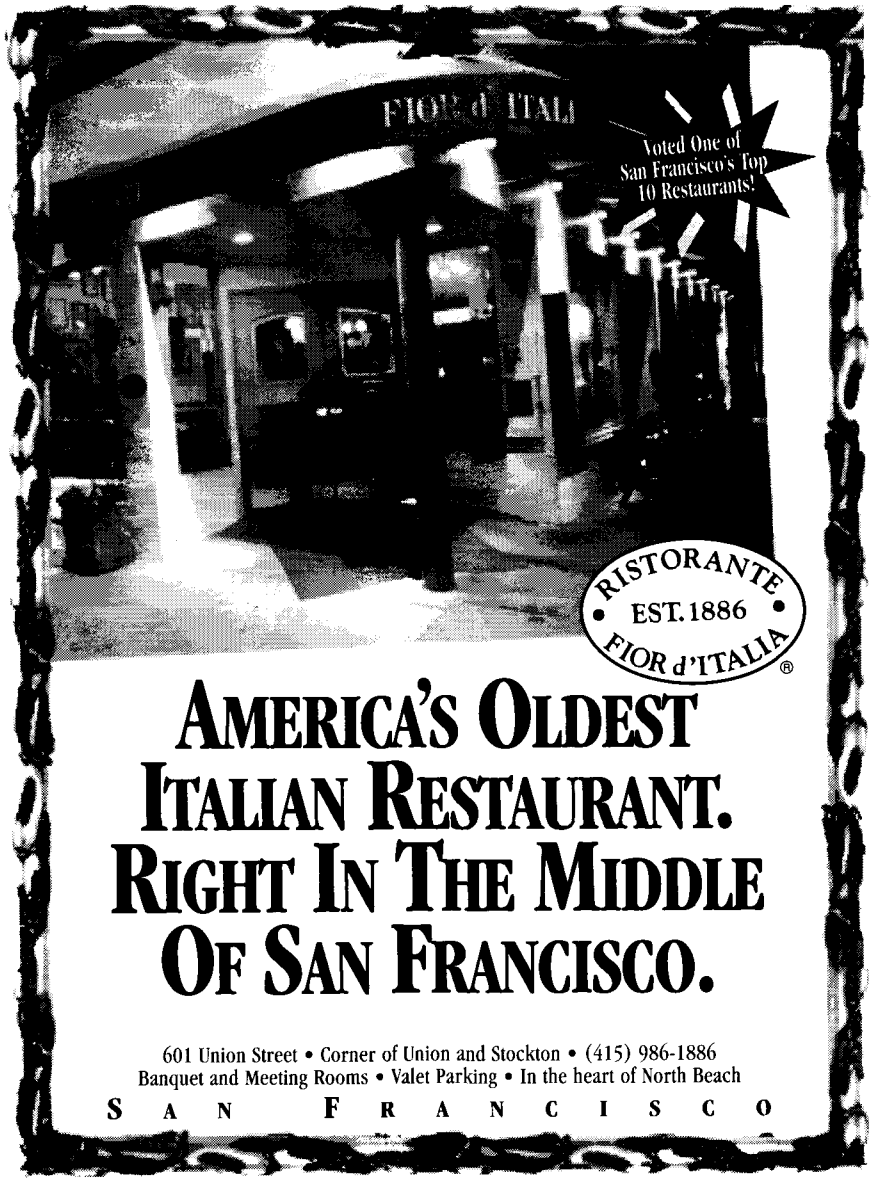
■

"Where is the Barney's warehouse sale held?" "On what newsstands can you get the *Village Voice* earliest?" You could imagine plenty of readers nodding to themselves, wondering if Mrs. Clinton could indeed explain what CBGB stands for.

A carpetbagging political candidate who hasn't learned the local geography would receive a media lashing anywhere in the Union. But in New York, the accumulation of facts small and large counts for more than it does just about anywhere else. It is the Manhattanite's supreme index of sophistication.

It's not that way in Seattle, which isn't exactly a backwater. Take for instance Ken, a friend of mine here who's no dummy. In fact he is a Yale graduate. But his acquaintance with pop culture, or lack of acquaintance, is something to behold. Recently over meals, when the topic has turned to movies, he has asked not only, "Who's Glenn Close?" but "Who's Michelle Pfeiffer?" When talk wound around to vacations, he asked, "What's a Winnebago?"

I first encountered the New York sophistication that's born of knowing trivia when I was a college freshman at Brown. On vacation and visiting Manhattan, I happened to run into a girl I'd known from my high school in suburban Southern California. She was a freshman at Columbia, and I was bowled over by her suddenly acquired savoir-faire. This consisted of dropping names I'd never heard of, mostly figures in the art world. Not that she knew these people personally—Merce Cunningham, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cindy Sherman, and on and on—or that she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had anything much to say about their work. She just knew their names, which I didn't. Having never encountered anyone like this before, I was instantly smitten with her. One day a few weeks later, after returning to campus in Providence, Rhode Island, I came across a group of high-school seniors being given a tour of the college by a student guide. The guide was gesturing grandly toward the city's skyline of one-and-a-half skyscrapers and boasting that "Providence has everything New York does, just in smaller quantities!" Cringing and humiliated, I thought, Yeah, everything but girls who know who Cindy Sherman is.

Some conservatives have insisted that knowing certain facts is not merely a sign of sophistication, but actually constitutes the heart of a good education. This was more or less the thesis advanced by educator E. D. Hirsch Jr. in his 1987 book, *Cultural Literacy*. But is Hirsch right? Around the time his book came out, I was driving an Oldsmobile with Rhode Island plates. At a gas station on Long Island, I was startled when the attendant, a high-school kid, looked at my plates, mentally scratched his head, and asked, "Huh, Rhode Island. Is that . . . a state?" Rhode Island sits, of course, just across Block Island Sound from the eastern tip of Long Island.

You could argue that the kind of Trivial Pursuit worldliness valued in New York is just a distorted form of Hirsch's cultural literacy, and hence has in it at least something to be praised. But from the perspective of Seattle, where you can get away with not knowing the difference between Pope John Paul and St. Paul, there's something refreshing about a head cleared of stuff that you really don't have to know. Evidently at my cable guy's church the pope/saint distinction isn't energetically pursued; and frankly, if you're an evangelical/nondenominational Christian and hence don't believe in popes or saints, why should it be? I've started to doubt the Hirschean educational model altogether. Is it really such a terrible thing that a gas-station attendant in Long Island never learned what Rhode Island is? Did he become an appreciably better citizen after I had informed him that it is a state?

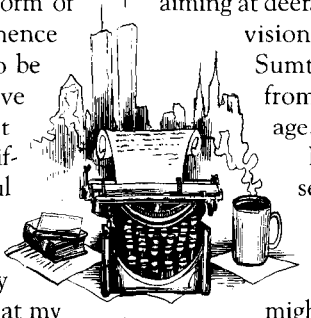
On hearing my Oldsmobile story, a friend in New York said, "Yeah, you know, I can tell you the name of every model of Oldsmobile that's been made for the past ten years. For some reason stuff like that just sticks in my mind." He sighed. "But in the morning, I still can't find my car keys." **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Green Acres

RICHARD BROOKHISER

As it does for many New Yorkers, the time came when I had to have green acres. So I bought 20 in Ulster County. There, I imagined, two or three times a month I would become a different man. I would observe the movements of constellations and toads. I would read Virgil, Frost, and Wendell Berry. When my neighbors upstate make noise, it comes from their sheep, not their stereos. Instead of high heels on the ceiling, I hear hickory nuts on the roof. When I go upstate I trade roaches for flies, ants, wasps, spiders, ticks, and daddy longlegs (that is a better deal). You can still get shot in the country, but your killers will have been aiming at deer. I vowed to have no television—my own private Fort Sumter, seceding not just from the city, but from the age.



Buying a country place seems like belated adulthood. I go to stores to look for things I need, not to look at things I might like (lesbians, I notice, nest at Home Depot; gay men decorate at IKEA). Having a country place requires things that most Manhattanites never do: paying a mortgage, and owning a car. As a conservative I always had a theoretical belief, rare among my fellow citizens, in the importance of property rights and tax rates. Now I will feel it in the bone.

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is author most recently of *Alexander Hamilton, American*.

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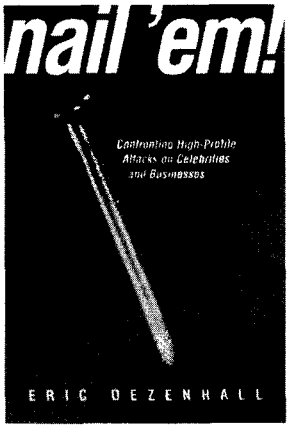

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A week after the closing, I experienced a real-life haiku that justified every nickel. I was lying in the hammock that overlooks the clearing that occupies one of my acres. High and silent, a jet crossed the sky, sliding from north to south, probably following the Hudson River to New York, or some-

■

The Hudson Valley is a narcotic. When the storm clouds pile up, and the bugs drone, anyone would join Rip Van Winkle in a 20-year snooze.

■

place farther down the coast. At the same moment, a migrating monarch butterfly crossed the clearing, fluttering in the same direction. The airplane was faster, but the insect was going farther, for monarchs winter in Mexico.

Zen is fine, but life goes on. Very soon I discovered that my occasional exiles were not as complete as I thought they would be. I wanted to stay plugged into the city, even when I was away from it. I began checking my phone messages, then rashly gave my country number to my colleagues. Now they leap the miles with queries. I also take a laptop and check my e-mail. I know the Internet is supposed to be everywhere and nowhere, the ultimate abolition of city and country both. Maybe pornographers and political dissidents use it so, but I log on to write brief notes to Manhattan friends. I could go cold turkey on one Gotham-related small screen, not two.

I also found that, to a surprising extent, the city has transplanted itself upstate. Tempo and density are different, but the hand of Manhattan stretches over the hinterlands. Every gas-station convenience store up there sells both the *New York Times* and the *New York Post*. You can live in the woods and never miss A. M. Rosenthal or Amy Sohn. The *Times* has been encouraging New Yorkers to go north. A story in late summer hailed the Catskills as the coming weekend place. The day after it appeared, a man at the next table in my favorite country restaurant was calling realtors on his cell phone and puzzling over a road map.

Lots of city people have long lived up there. In 1992 the Jerry Brown campaign held a rally in Union Square before the New York primary, and I thought they had emptied Vermont to bring in so many old hippies. But I had not reckoned on the transplanted city people of upstate. One of my new neighbors lives in the 200-year-old barn of a former dairy farm. Her acres include a beaver pond, apple trees she lets us harvest, and the site of an old sweat lodge she built. She told us hopefully that the Jewish New Year was 5760, which means we all have a chance to live the '60s again. Another neighbor, who has educated me in circuit breakers and log splitting, and introduced me to his dog, a mix of bear hound and coon dog, is a sculptor who designs the interiors of stores in Soho.

New York City and the Hudson Valley alter consciousness in related, though different, ways. The city is a stimulant. Everyone in it, even Mormons and Christian Scientists, is on a perennial caffeine rush. The Hudson Valley is a narcotic. When the storm clouds pile up, and the bugs drone, anyone would join Rip Van Winkle in a 20-year snooze. Both atmospheres probably derive from the buried Dutchness. If the key to Dutch life is intense privacy, in the countryside that means isolation, while in the city it produces laissez-faire.

Our last trip upstate lasted five days. That may have been too long. I began looking suspiciously at the millions of trees, and thinking, "What are you up to?" Our first day back in town, we rose at a civilized hour, and went downtown, where each block had more people on the sidewalk than live in our new upstate village. We window-shopped, had lunch at four, and listened to a man on Greene Street yelling passages from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. **NR**

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■ ART ■

In Your Face

JAMES GARDNER

FOR the 75-year-old Ingres, the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 represented nothing less than the crowning achievement of a lifetime in art. Sixty-nine of his paintings were gathered together in a full-dress retrospective of a sort that, though scarcely a third the size of the superb exhibit now at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, was almost unheard-of at the time. And how did Ingres respond to this most personal triumph? He fled Paris at once, ducking for cover in a country house at Meung-sur-Loire. He foresaw all too well the critical onslaught that awaited him. Baudelaire likened his works to "a population of automatons that disturbs our senses by its all too visible and palpable strangeness." For Paul Mantz, the galleries were as inviting as a hospital ward "for lymphatic or bilious patients." Most cutting of all, the Goncourt brothers compared Ingres's life's work unfavorably to the portraits of Cogniet, of whom, *even then*, no one had ever heard!

■

'I want to break with my century,' wrote Ingres. 'That is how ignorant, stupid, and brutal I find it.'

■

Though possibly the greatest of French painters, praised by some as the very God of Drawing, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres suffered such attacks without respite for almost seven decades, from the time he left Toulouse as a young man to enter the studio of Jacques-Louis David, until the day of his death at 86. Almost half his career was spent in Florence and Rome, where he found relative peace amid cantankerous obscurity. "I want to break with my century," he once wrote. "That is how ignorant, stupid, and brutal I find it."

But if Ingres came to be known as an embittered curmudgeon, that was hardly the whole story. He was one of those people whose body and face are fundamentally at odds with the person inside. Hunched over and grayly brooding, Ingres looked every bit like a Sumatran rhino beset on all sides by the mincing picadors of the Parisian art press. Yet underneath that hide—and a very thin hide it was—were deep and unanticipated reservoirs of sweetness. Twice he married women who, in the otherwise sober words of the exhibition's catalogue, were "destined to make Ingres the most contented husband imaginable." Then, when he became head of the French Academy in Rome, a veritable genius for pedagogy turned him into a devoted father figure to an entire generation of French artists. Even when he encountered his arch-nemesis, Delacroix—"the Apostle of Ugliness," as Ingres called him—the latter had to admit that he found Ingres to be "very cordial and very courteous."

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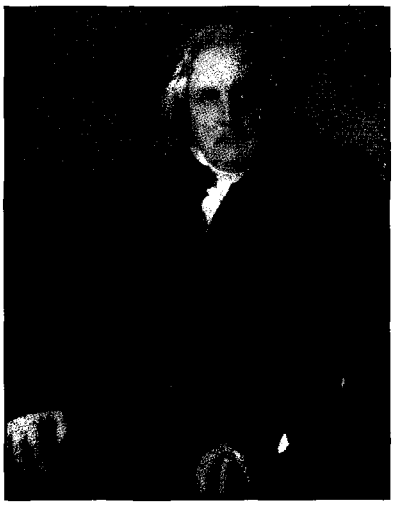
What Delacroix most disparaged in his older rival was that he seemed to have "no imagination at all." What Delacroix meant, if we read between the lines, is that Ingres lacked the literary instinct that Delacroix excelled in, which saw painting as an extension of the narrative art of Dante, Goethe, and Byron. In one sense, the claim is not entirely unwarranted. Today Ingres is known chiefly as a portraitist. But like Gainsborough before him and Sargent after, he disparaged this lucrative career, imagining he was meant for loftier things, namely history painting, whose preeminence in art theory had remained unchallenged since the Cinquecento. Thus he poured his heart, but not his genius, into grand historical canvases like *The Martyrdom of Saint Symphorean* (1834) or *The Entry into Paris of the Dauphin* (1821). These works are marred by the absence of the one thing that Delacroix, so deficient in other respects, understood implicitly: If a history painting is to work, its myriad parts must be linked by a single vertebral column of passion, whether that passion is fiery or cold as ice. And yet, even in these paintings, Ingres refuses to abandon his habitually dogged observation of surface or to subordinate the manifold parts into a single and harmonious whole.



Monsieur Louis-François Bertin *(1832)*

Of course, nothing from Ingres's hand is ever wholly bad, and some of these works, like *The Vow of Louis XIII* (1824) and *Odalisque with Slave* (1839), are masterpieces of sorts. But his real genius was reserved for portraiture, and thus it is fitting that the exhibition should be devoted to this only. It is here that we see the full evidence of Ingres's prodigious imagination, even though it was not what the artists of his time understood by the imagination. A modernist *avant la lettre*, Ingres was able in practice, if not in theory, to see beyond the mimetic vanity of portraiture to a unified work of art. Only an artist of the rarest visual imagination could have pulled off these thousand felicities of color and form—the gold chain looping like a glowworm against the nocturnal blackness of Jacques-Louis Blanc's vest, the energetic intrusion into the foreground of Madame de Senonnes's crimson sleeve, the abrupt, upward thrust of a canary-colored collar against the gray, Pontormoesque face of Marcotte d'Argen- teuil, the olive tint of Granet's features as they rhyme with the clouds that lower over the Quirinale in the background. Except for its impassioned use of paint, all of 20th-century abstraction can be seen *in statu nascendi* in the harmonies of Ingres's portraiture.

But Ingres was more than a pure painter. He was a keen observer both of character and of the visible reality that surrounded him. In his portraits he does not reduce his sitters to rank, as Rubens so often does, nor to glamorous pose, as Van Dyck. He does not peer with almost impertinent penetration into his sitters' souls, as did Rembrandt, nor does he seek, like Velásquez, to expose the anxieties they would rather keep hidden. Ingres, that master of *le beau idéal*, courses serenely among these extremes. His sitters are elegant without being flimsy, and though unfailingly refined, they possess a basic earthiness. In this connection I can do no better than to quote with complete approval the words of one curator of this exhibition, Phillip Conisbee, regarding the image of a certain Englishman: "In all of Western portraiture there is nothing to compare with Ingres's astonishingly realistic drawing of a feisty, spindle-thin, ugly old man named Thomas Church." Ingres's portrait drawings, rivaled only by those of Holbein and of Picasso circa 1916, are especially abundant in this exhibit. Many are three-quarter views, the torsos rendered with a nervous, almost reckless energy: The graphite smudges into shading or zigzags around the creases and folds of a garment, defining volume and character at one and the same time. But then, as it reaches the face, suddenly all is silent. At this point an Apollonian reserve takes over, stilling the artist's hand and focusing his eye to a fury of concentrated observation.

If there is one painting by Ingres that might stand as the summa of his art, one work that will sear itself indelibly into the memory of all visitors to this exhibition, it is surely the portrait of Monsieur Bertin from 1832. Seated in a simple bourgeois chair against a gray-green backdrop, this royalist editor of *Le journal des débats*, clad in a roughly fitted black jacket, with stubby fingers clutching at aged knees, seems to engage the viewer with a glance at once challenging and paternal. It is tempting to imagine that Ingres poured himself as much into this portrait as into any of his numerous self-portraits: This is the tribute of one Sumatran rhino to another. Monsieur Bertin sees the world as it is without being waylaid by theoretical abstractions. Unyielding in the face of perennial adversity, he is yet gracious in ultimate victory. One can easily see why the critic Calonne believed that this was "the most notable piece of art that our century has produced." **NR**

■ FILM ■

Horror Shows

JOHN SIMON

WARREN ADLER'S novel ***Random Hearts*** went from hand to hand in the 15 years between being bought for, and getting brought to, the screen. I'd be surprised if the author could recognize much of the movie as his own. Dutch Van Den Broeck, in the internal-affairs division of the Washington police, and Kay Chandler, a New Hampshire congresswoman running for re-election, discover that their respective spouses have long been cheating on them with each other and were headed for yet another Miami escapade when their plane crashed. Being duped by the dead is

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apparently especially painful, and the enraged Dutch hurls himself into tracking down everything trackable, drawing the reluctant Kay into a *folie à deux*. From the ashes of two posthumously wrecked marriages, a beautiful new romance will sprout.

Dutch, whom we have seen as a terrific internal-affairs cop hounding a rotten apple in the police barrel, is even more relentless in unearthing details of this still-more-internal affair. Dragging Kay with him, he sniffs around the Miami hotel room where two pairs of terry-cloth slippers under the double bed are waiting

■

Once a pleasantly easeful actor, Harrison Ford has gone earnest by turning as stiff as any log floating downstream.

■

in adulterous proximity. Following a grotesque trail, he and Kay find even the Chesapeake Bay cottage in which the cheating couple used to play house away from home.

The maniacal frenzy with which Dutch hopes to discover heaven knows what (used prophylactics?) makes him a less than sympathetic character, not helped by Harrison Ford's brutish stolidity yielding only now and then to brutish fury. Once a pleasantly easeful actor, Ford has gone earnest by turning as stiff as any log floating downstream to the saw mill, his hedgehog hairstyle, if anything, even less perturbable. Under the circumstances, Kristin Scott Thomas, who manages to play a woman touchingly falling in love with this lug, or log, is downright amazing. Sydney Pollack, a good director, has not only directed routinely, but also contributes a supporting performance matching in stodginess the one he gave in *Eyes Wide Shut*.

■ Highly touted as the film of the season, ***Fight Club*** is actually a movie that could perhaps be used as an insect repellent if it did not also assault human sensibilities. The director, David Fincher, who scored with *Seven* and wobbled with *The Game*, now plummets to what, in better times, might have been deemed rock bottom. Fincher features weird gim-

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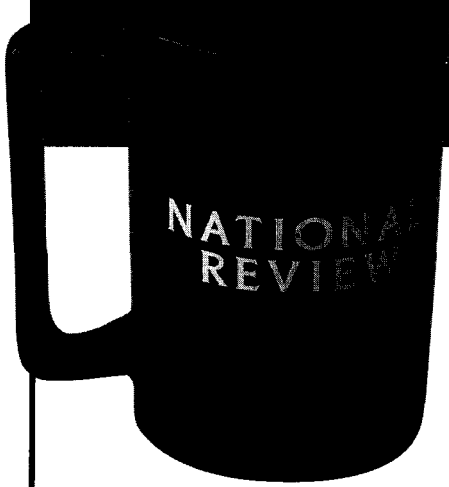

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micks in his movies, gimmicks that have steadily gotten gimmickier. The one wagging *Fight Club* is so outlandish as to demonstrate how indistinguishable excessive cleverness can be from stupidity.

What regrettably shields Fincher, the screenwriter Jim Uhls, and Chuck Palahniuk, author of the underlying novel, is that no reviewer can, in good conscience, give away that preposterous gimmick. Too bad, too, that the film begins with a storyline that, though farfetched, is not without interest, but is soon dropped in favor of matchlessly sadomasochistic virulence combined with perfect incredibility.

We start with Narrator (no other name is given), a mid-level white-collar worker so bored with his job as to become addicted to amassing IKEA furniture he cannot use. To ease his malaise and insomnia, he seeks out all conceivable nocturnal support-group meetings, and, under an assumed name, pretends to be a fellow sufferer, just to feel something. His troubles begin when he meets Marla Singer, an attractive but hyperneurotic young woman who plays the same game, yet, at first, harshly snubs his attempts at co-conspiracy.

Soon, worse befalls both him and the movie. Tyler Durden, a young man who sat next to him on a plane, leads Narrator on night-prowling expeditions on which the two fight each other, or get a growing legion of fellow nightcrawlers to engage in bloody brawls. They form a fight club, heavily laden with overtly macho and covertly homoerotic symbolism, eventually leading to the unspeakable, or at least the not-to-be-divulged.

Do not, however, hold out the hope that if the whole is absurd, the parts, at any rate, might satisfy. How seriously can you take, for example, a reputable office-worker arriving on the job every day more bloodied, disfigured, and disreputable-looking without being fired by his prissy supervisor? If the more improbable stretches of *Fight Club* could be marketed, they might put rubber bands out of business. Also, bits of dialogue are so unintentionally laughable as to keep the wrong side of your mouth working overtime.

As Narrator, Edward Norton continues his recent predilection for unsavory roles well played. As the bisexually heartthrobby Tyler and the daintily dirty Marla, Brad Pitt and Helena Bonham Carter also do their damnedest in a hopeless cause that, given current audience and critical tastes, may not be all that hopeless, alas. Conspicuous among a rogue's gallery of supporting players is the musician Meat Loaf, whom the *New York Times* once referred to as Mr. Loaf, and who here qualifies as Mr. Oaf. And let's not forget the Dust Brothers, whose music adds its not inconsiderable bit of wormwood to the rest.

■ Having barely recovered from *Fight Club*, I was hit with Rob Reiner's ***The Story of Us***, which not only mates the soggy and the sappy, but manages to carry them conjointly to yet unplumbed depths. Purporting to be a mature look at what derails a 15-year-old marriage, the film itself becomes unhinged as it tries to be both searing and cheering, both honeyed and honest. This is not to say that drama and comedy don't mix, only that if you don't know how to mix ingredients for a cocktail, you had better not tend bar. Reiner's comedy, in any case, is leaden; his tears, pure glycerin.

Bruce Willis and Michelle Pfeiffer as Ben and Katie Jordan live in a model home with model teenage children (one boy, one girl), and play happy games at the dinner table. But it's all a sham: The moment the catered-to kids are off to camp, the infighting begins and divorce lurks around each cozy corner.

As co-authored by the television sitcom-writer Alan Zweibel and the actress-turned-filmmaker Jessie Nelson, the screenplay puts two potentially interesting actors through embarrassing routines, such as Willis running around the kitchen naked save for a skimpy apron, and Pfeiffer consulting with two ditsy matrons in a restaurant on how to ward off one's husband's connubial ardors. Willis, you see, is the kind of clod who does not notice when the family car's dashboard indicator points to low windshield-wiper fluid, while sensitive Pfeiffer notices acutely. (Unfortunately, there are no needles to point out when authorial invention is running low.) When the Jordans take a trip to Venice to rekindle their marriage, they are sabotaged by a couple of cliché ugly-American tourists, goons who block the lagoons.

The movie ceaselessly switches periods, indicated by giving the balding Willis more or less fake hair, the lovely Pfeiffer one more exaggerated coiffure after another. This is, of course, of tremendous interest to the wigmakers and hairdressers in the audience, but leaves the rest of us sadly out. The climax is reached in an endless, bathetic speech wherein Pfeiffer suddenly pleads for keeping the marriage together, which the hapless actress rattles off with the film's only convincing emotion: embarrassment. **NR**

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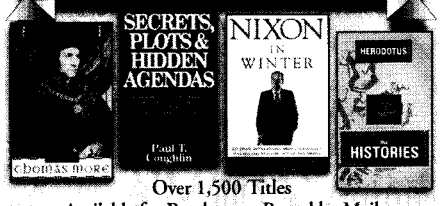

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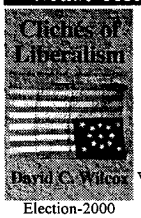

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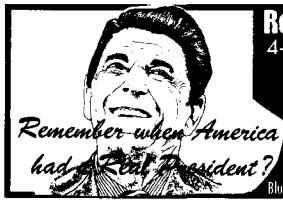

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Who Is W., What Is He?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 14

As will happen from now until Iowa 2000, the subject was: George W. Bush. The commentators and analysts were men, some of whom know him, all of whom feel that the country has a stake in his enterprise, whether he wins or loses, the nomination or the presidency. The exchange narrowed to two participants . . .

A: I wonder whether the careless, offhanded manners of Gov. Bush suggest a less than serious interest in the serious questions that face the country. One Democrat, who abandoned his party to work for Bush, commented publicly that Bush has very few ideological or even party interests. Maybe he has no well-founded interests in the future either of the GOP or of the country.

B: Let me tell you what I know, from just a very few meetings with him. He gets the picture very quickly. The kind of person you give one sentence to and knows right away what the next sentence is going to be—he thinks that fast.

A: But when he does think, does he think toughmindedly?

B: Let me tell you something. Bush is exactly to be compared with FDR. Walter Lippmann wrote about FDR in the summer of 1932 that he was an affable man who, without any special qualifications, very much wanted to be president. We found out after he became president what his tough internal strengths were—

A: But the question here is: Is George W. Bush the FDR Lippmann dismissed in 1932, or is he what FDR turned out to be?

B: Let me tell you something about the personal toughness of George W. When his father thought it was time to dismiss John Sununu, that was a very tough personal and professional call. You know who he asked to give the word to Sununu?

A: Obviously George W., the way you put it.

B: Ah, yes. A successful president relies on the powerful and effective people he surrounds himself with. It was so with FDR, and also with Ronald Reagan. Gov. Bush has got himself top people as advisers, consultants, and backers. Including over half of the GOP governors and over half of the GOP Congressmen—

A: But his appeal has got to be primarily that he sounds like a winner. Everybody wants a winner. But we shouldn't confuse a politician's resources with a politician's popularity—

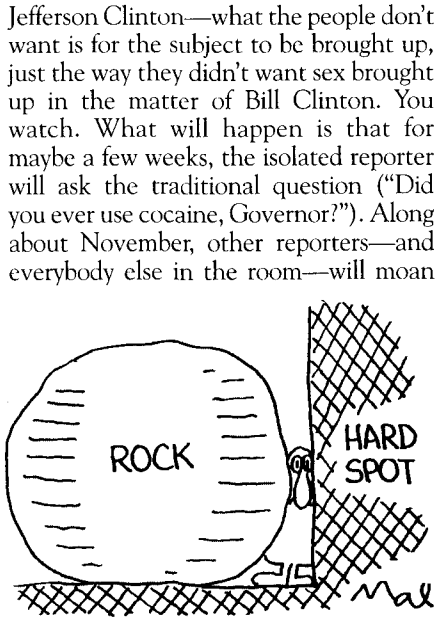
B: Look at the state of California. Next year there will be a redistricting. In 1998 the Republican candidate for governor lost by 20 points. The redistricting will conceivably result in ten more Democratic seats in the House than there are now, and the GOP majority is less than that. The electoral vote of California is one-fifth of what is needed to win the presidency. What this means, given the demographic picture in California at this point, is that the Republicans will win depending on whether they can attract the Hispanic vote.

A: Why is Bush especially qualified on this point?

B: He and his brother are intimately involved with Hispanics, and Gov. Jeb's wife is one. George W.'s Hispanic vote rose to 49 percent in 1998. And let me tell you something else: His social mannerisms may strike people from the Northeast as excessively informal. But close-up contact—high-fives, hugs, the whole bit—is western-style politics and especially effective with demonstrative people. I'm not suggesting that George W. learned his social manners wooing Texan Hispanics. But I am saying that he has picked up ways of dealing with people which reflect a gregarious personality, and very effectively so.

A: Will the cocaine business hurt him?

B: As Dick Morris said—a pretty cool cat on political questions, as witness the successes of his old client William Jefferson Clinton—what the people don't want is for the subject to be brought up, just the way they didn't want sex brought up in the matter of Bill Clinton. You watch. What will happen is that for maybe a few weeks, the isolated reporter will ask the traditional question ("Did you ever use cocaine, Governor?"). Along about November, other reporters—and everybody else in the room—will moan when they hear the question. By the time of Iowa, it will be as taboo to bring it up as it is taboo today to bring up Lewinsky at any presidential press conference.



A: You've made a lot of interesting points.

B: Go ahead and use them.

A: Okay, I will.

Giuliani's Own Exhibit

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 28

Mayor Rudy Giuliani of New York has given electric satisfaction, not only to many New Yorkers, but also nationwide to those who have had it with the aggressive pretensions of some artists and their impresarios. Mayor Giuliani, with his gift for barefisted formulations, focused on the Madonna exhibit (the object with porno vaginas decorating the Madonna and a clump of elephant dung on her breast), and remarked that "there is nothing in the Constitution that says that the First Amendment requires that the taxpayers fund aggressive, vicious, disgusting attacks on religion." He's got that right. He's got that almost right. What the First Amendment forbids isn't anti-religious exhibits on public property, but religious observances on public property.

The religious aspect of the dumb effrontery of the Brooklyn Museum people is the more transient question being argued. The more durable question has to do with what passes for art, and who and where responsibilities vest for passing judgment on such questions. What Giuliani has said about the "Sensation" exhibit, including the Madonna and such other features as a decomposing cow's head being munched by flies, and a sliced pig carcass . . . whatever, is that a museum partly financed by the City of New York has specifiable minimum responsibilities to the city, and that one of these is to refrain from public defecations over religious symbols.

On the matter of obscenity, the mind goes back to the last major public inquiry on the question. The sheriff of the City of Cincinnati served a grand-jury indictment in 1990 on the Contemporary Arts Center, which was featuring an exhibit of Mapplethorpe photographs which included depictions of the kind of thing men do to each other while communicating AIDS (of which Mapplethorpe died),

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and a bullwhip growing out of a male rectum. Well, it went to trial—and the jury exonerated the gallery on the charges of exhibiting obscenity.

An enterprising *New York Times* reporter (Isabel Wilkerson) gave the reading public a scoop by closely interviewing a juror. James Jones told the reporter exactly what had gone on in the jury room. What he said was that the jury had decided that it was simply unequipped to judge whether the exhibit was obscene under the rules set down by the Supreme Court in *Miller* v. *California* in 1973, which authorized prosecutions of matter that 1) appeals to prurient interest, 2) depicts sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, and 3) lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Juror Jones reported that the panel was unanimous on the first two of the tests set down by the Court. But who were they to overrule the curator of the Cincinnati museum on whether the exhibit had serious artistic value? Mr. Jones gave an example of the problem the jurors faced. Look, he said, "it's like Picasso. Picasso, from what everybody tells me, was an artist. It's not my cup of tea. I don't understand it. But if people say it's art, then I have to go along with it."

They were troubled by it all. "Most of the eight jurors," Miss Wilkerson reported, "are working class, churchgoing family people who, even as they signed the verdict sheets, still could not believe that they were exonerating photographs that showed, in one case, a man urinating into another man's mouth. 'At one point we said to ourselves, is this really us making this decision?' "

The battery lined up against Mr. Giuliani is saying exactly what one would expect, which is that what must above all be protected is the freedom of the artist who has discovered elephant dung as his métier. Mayor Giuliani's reply is that the factor of public responsibility gets into the question, where public money is being used. His focus is on subsidized irreverence, rather than artistic independence. But he does not deny that anybody has the right to do anything with dung and Madonnas, but on their own time, under their own auspices. The effect of his ruling is rather a brake on artistic anarchy, than a call for public reverence; and it is primarily this stand of his that galvanizes public enthusiasm.

The "Sensation" show came over from London. There, sophisticated critics almost uniformly mocked it. The special hubris of artists is very much in the forefront of the dispute. "I don't understand it. But if people say it's art, then I have to go along with it." The mayor is standing up against the authority of city museum directors to rub their exhibitors' semen in the face of normal, sophisticated New Yorkers, on public premises. Mr. Giuliani is hardly a Philistine, and he has shown here at least as much courage as the depraved artist who believes that he should be protected by the United States Marines when he sorties into public museums to profane, in wild elaborations, the faith of a hundred million Americans.

The Reagan Portrait

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 5

It is very early to assess finally the work of Edmund Morris on Ronald Reagan. The book is long, time short, schedules crowded, but one point it isn't too early to make. It is that the book's publication touched off a very large chorus of people who knew Reagan at close quarters, as also others who had studied his administration closely. They have protested the book's fictional device as unsuccessful and distracting, and protested also widely quoted animadversions on Reagan as a human being and political thinker.

The Left moved quickly. In *The New Yorker*, Hendrik Hertzberg deals voluptuously with those passages, a summary of which make of Reagan an "airhead." He complains about the book's weaknesses, but in doing so laments the company he knows he will be keeping: "It's no fun at all to be put in the position of having to join what will presumably be a gaggle of stuffed shirts, all querulously . . . scolding Morris for being a bad, bad boy." The stuffed shirts who have criticized the book include George Will, Charles Krauthammer, Robert Novak, Peggy Noonan, and Robert Bartley, a stuffed shirt here defined as a political conservative.

What these critics have stressed is the invincible reluctance of Edmund Morris to acquiesce in the phenomenon of Ronald Reagan, assiduously though he researched the boy, the student, the lifeguard, the radio commentator, actor, union leader, lecturer, governor, and president. Hertzberg summarizes his review: "It's clear that, at bottom, Morris dislikes Reagan. It's also clear that he thinks Reagan was a great man and a great, or nearly great, President, because he restored the country's optimistic spirit, revitalized the economy, and brought the Soviet Union to its knees. But Morris does not show *how* Reagan did these things, or even *that* he did them . . . In *Dutch: A Memoir* there is almost nothing about electoral politics, nothing at all about ideological politics, and not a word about political economy."

The force of Reagan's character and personality cleave apart Morris's efforts to disdain him. Arguments against rearmament were various, opposed by "Weinberger . . . out of brute conviction. Reagan said, 'Well . . . ' and shook his head and smiled because he *believed* the way a child believes—ardently and absolutely. He believed in Reaganomics; therefore Reaganomics had to be. God had saved him from death [Reagan's survival of the assassin in 1981], therefore God wanted him to do the things he had vowed to do." Morris can't understand childlike faith, and must therefore condescend to it. His failure to understand that quality of faith is the cause of his failure to understand Reagan.

All of that said, book-readers should not deny themselves *Dutch*. There are two reasons for this. The first is the fine writing of the celebrated author. The second is a briskness of narrative which belies its great length (672 pages of text), and the master's eye for detail, his own and Reagan's. President "Mitterrand's habitually sour expression, which suggested that he was in the habit of sipping neat lime juice, masked a dry, deadly humor and considerable private sensuality, noticeable to anyone who watched him eat." And the eye for the muzzle velocity of Reagan's penetrations. "A reporter asked the President what he thought of what he saw [Reagan was looking at the Berlin Wall]. He gestured at the Wall and said succinctly, 'It's as ugly as the idea behind it.' "

Morris gives us a graphic example of the deftness of Reagan's editing. The two sentences written for him to recite at the opening of his toast to state visitor Anwar Sadat were in Reagan's own hand transformed from banality to buoyant geniality. Morris's unprecedented access to the president made him something of an omnipresence after he began his venture. Did a historian at his heels disturb Reagan? He spoke of it at the Alfalfa Club. "Frankly, I hadn't given it much thought until the other night. Nancy sneezed in her sleep and I heard Edmund say Gesundheit."

Morris lingers over the lifelessness of Reagan's diary, which apparently has not one hint of color or movement or singularity in the day's events or visitors. He simply has no explanation for the contrast with the vibrant Dutch of the toast to Sadat or of the Berlin Wall, perhaps for that reason failing to understand *why* and *how* Reagan animated the country.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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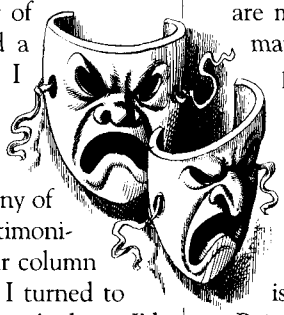
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

NORA EPHRON likes to tell a story about the advice she got from her screenwriter mother: Never regret any experience, no matter how grisly or boring, because "Everything is copy." Translated from writer's shoptalk, you can get a column out of anything, and that's just what I am about to do because I am writing this in the middle of moving to a new apartment.

I could have told NR about the move and asked them to send in a pinch hitter until I got settled, but I shrank from doing that. It's simply a matter of honor: I've never missed a deadline in my life, and I refuse to start now. Even more important, I don't want any Gentle Readers on my conscience. So many of you write me heartfelt testimonials such as, "Reading your column keeps me sane," and, "If I turned to the last page and you weren't there, I'd consider suicide," that I've been experiencing a twinge each time I write *Fragile* on a carton. Besides, I have no choice: The rug cleaners just left and I can't move from this spot until everything dries, so I might as well write something.



My new place is only four blocks away, but I feel as if I'm going to the moon. I've lived in this old apartment for 16 years. You know what that means: Every word I've written for NR has been written here, plus the last half of *Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady* (I moved in the middle of that too), as well as four subsequent books and God knows how many reviews. A local acquaintance said they should put a bronze plaque on the building. I told her that knowing the landlord, he'd probably say, "How much is a tin one?"

It was also the site of my last fling, at age 48, so the new place will be my first completely chaste home since the going rate for attractive efficiencies in Washington was $75 a month. I have marked the transformation by giving away my old double bed and buying a twin bed to take up less room, but I must admit that the symbolism is perfect.

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Still, another kind of excitement may be in the offing judging from a clause in the lease I just signed. It says: "No four-legged pets allowed." When I know the new landlord better, I may suggest a more concise way of phrasing that. Exotic pets are all the rage now; monkeys have two arms and two legs, and snakes don't have any legs at all.

For someone whose powers of mental concentration approach self-hypnosis, the worst thing about moving is the way it interferes with following the news. Gone are my leisurely coffee-filled hours of marking and clipping the morning papers. For the past couple of weeks I have had the attention span of a soccer mom, glancing at a headline here, scanning a story there, and wondering what it all has to do with life's really important concerns, like where the hell is the telephone man.

Being a member of the movers' focus group is like taking that famous history class at Harvard alongside Robert Benchley, who said he learned that Charlemagne did something with the Holy Roman Empire in A.D. 800, but that he had no idea what. Now that I've temporarily joined the ranks of distracted Americans, I've been making do with the gist of the news and shrinking the issues until they fit neatly into my leftover mental niches. That way I can take them out and look at them when I have some down time, like now.

This week, for example, I learned that House Speaker Denny Hastert did something with health-care legislation that made him look more pathetic than ever, like the lug whose perennially embarrassed wife is always jabbing him in the ribs at parties and hissing, "Stop doing that!" Then, right afterwards, or maybe it was right before, Tom DeLay did something with the income of the working poor. What it all means, in the considered opinion of the movers' focus group, is that Republicans can no longer object to anything for fear of being accused of hating whatever it is.

Scientists interested in measuring the effects of moving on the human brain, take note: When the Senate rejected a black judge named White and David Horowitz came out with a new book called *Hating Whitey* in the same week, I felt positively coordinated. Coming on top of the *J'accuse* Alan Dershowitz hurled at Pat Buchanan, it established the point at which the names of conservatives who have not yet been called racists would fit on a three-by-five card and still leave room for my window-shade measurements.

Before someone accuses me of movism, I wish to point out a surprising discovery I've made: Havoc isn't all bad. Deep thinking is fine in its place, but nothing concentrates the mind like deep cleaning. Being unaccustomed to physical exhaustion, I was unprepared for the almost out-of-body experience of blinding clarity it triggered when I finally finished packing my books and sank down with the morning papers to read George W. Bush's backpedaling explanations of what he really meant when he lambasted conservatives twice in one week.

"But oftentimes, people only hear the sterile numbers of economic news that we talk about."

"Oftentimes, people only hear our gloom-and-doom scenario . . . "

"I was making the case that when we'll oftentimes be talking about numbers and economics . . . "

"I said oftentimes our party has been mischaracterized . . . "

His strained venture into the anachronistic poesy of "oftentimes" hit me like one of those sunbursts that bad novelists enjoy describing. I knew approximately how the quotation went but I had to check the exact wording, so I ripped open G.E. Three-Speed Exhaust Fan, the box containing my complete Shakespeare that I had just sealed up, and turned to the beginning of *Macbeth*, where Banquo comments on the meaning of the prediction the witches have just made:

> *And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,*
> *The instruments of darkness tell us truths,*
> *Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's*
> *In deepest consequence.*

If compassionate conservatism corrupts, does absolute compassionate conservatism corrupt absolutely? **NR**

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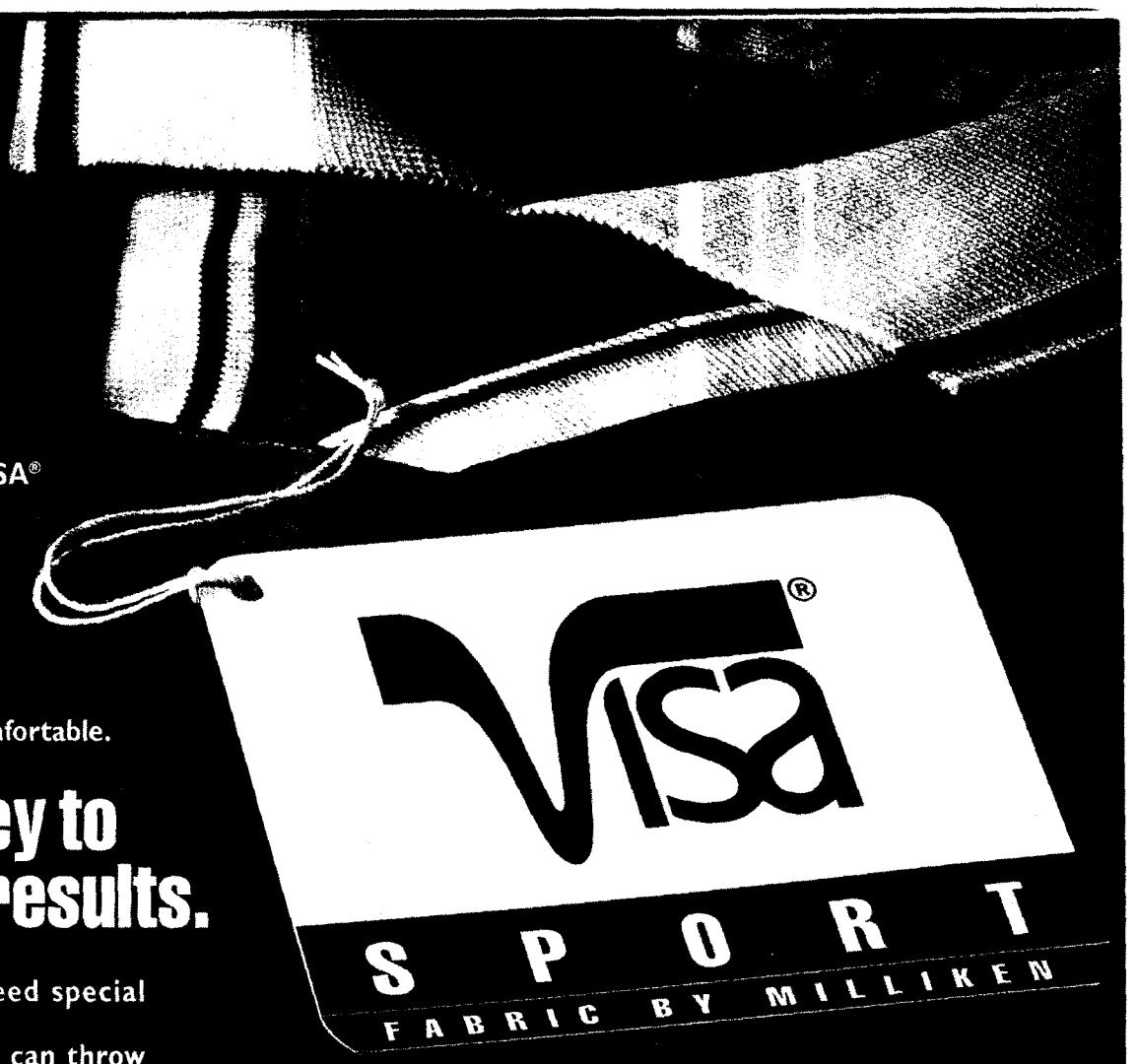

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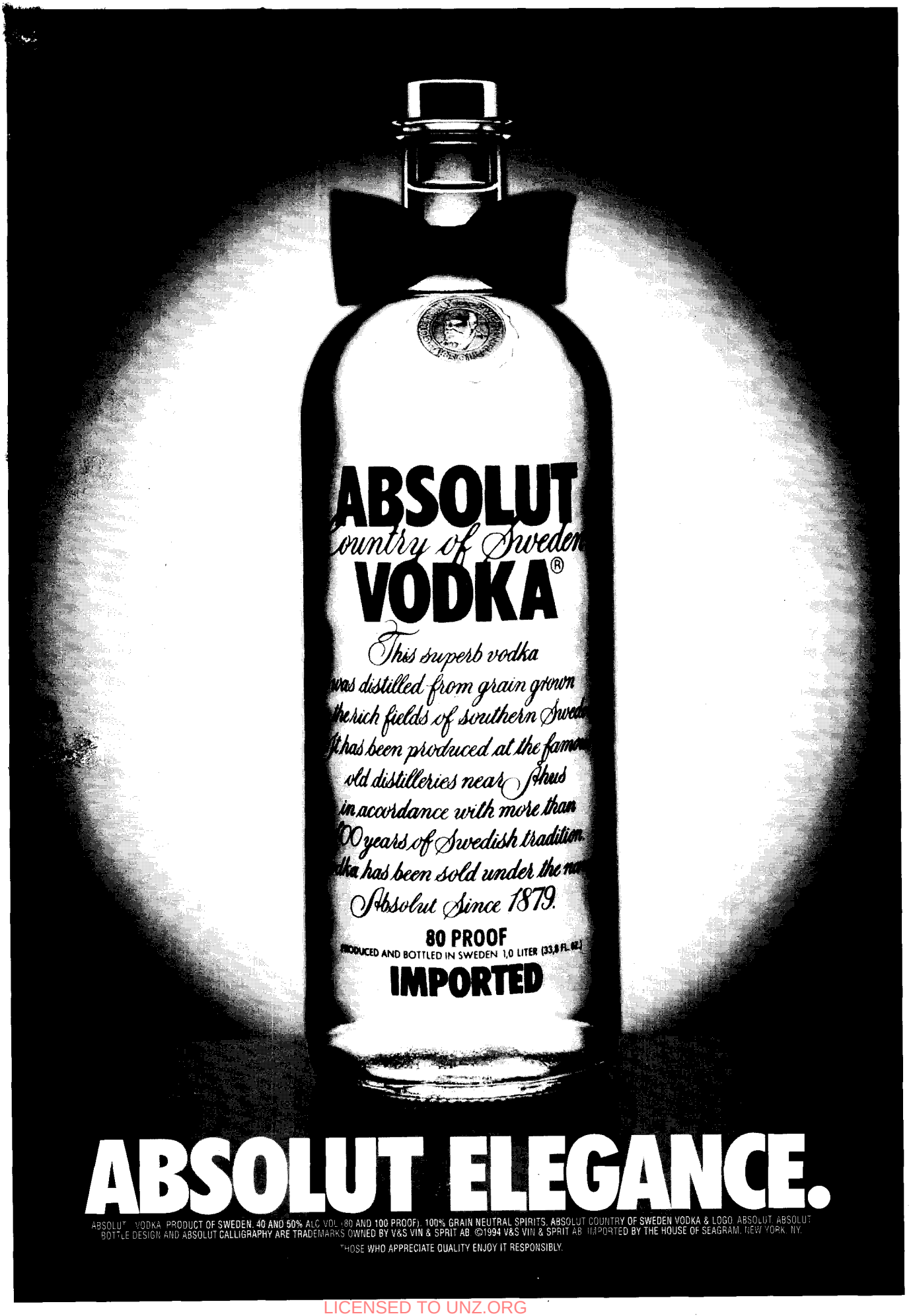
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